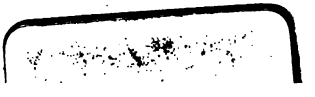

THE LADY BLANCHE.

A Novelette.

BY

HAROLD ST. CLAIR.

London:
SAMUEL TINSLEY,
10, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND.
1877.

CONTENTS.

THE LADY BLANCHE.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE PARK.

"Alas, that love should be a blight and snare."

THE warm, bright summer's day had nearly passed, and the sultry atmosphere was somewhat tempered by a light breeze that sprang up towards twilight. Those who had feared to encounter the fierceness of the noonday heat, now ventured forth

to enjoy the coolness of the evening hour.

The park was crowded with loiterers; some strolling on the green sward, or seated in the shade of the trees, now heavy with foliage. Most of the visitors consisted of persons belonging to the middle and lower classes; the great world was at dinner, the world of mechanics and artisans could only snatch one brief hour for relaxation after the evening meal, and richly did they enjoy this respite from toil.

Under the shadow of a magnificent beech-tree two figures were seated on a rustic bench. They could scarcely be discerned in the deepening twilight, and probably it was their wish to remain un-

observed, for the dress of each was unobtrusive in the extreme. It would have been a difficult matter to have decided on the rank of these two individuals; so closely screened were they by the ponderous branches of the giant trees, one could hardly judge by their low, murmured words that the speakers were a man and woman.

Three hours earlier in the day, the Lady Blanche Howard had passed that rustic seat, reining in her splendid horse to listen to the vapid flatteries and unmeaning compliments of her companion, Sir Percy Douglas, and longing for the calm twilight that was to bring respite to tortured ear and throbbing heart. And now that longed-for hour had come, and

Lady Blanche listened to the sweetest music that can greet a woman's ear, for he who spoke was no vapid flatterer, nor trained courtier, but a true man, and a king amongst men, one of those rare gems flung at times from the human ocean. Of royal presence and noble port, his broad forehead wore on its ample front a prouder badge than kingly crown, and his large eyes shone with a steady light. He did not fear to lift those clear eyes to the face of the Earl's daughter; for, although poor and low-born according to the world's ritual, the artist was her master. The barriers that, according to the recognised code of society, sundered them were to him but as straws to stem the tide. She might claim the heritage of rank and wealth,

but what was this in comparison with the gifts bestowed on him by heaven? Brave, chivalrous, and true-hearted, proud and high-spirited, Henry Mortimer owned no superior amongst God's creatures, and few could be regarded as his peers; of him it might indeed be said "He was ennobled by his God!" And yet from the sacred and exclusive pale of society he was banned and barred; within that charmed circle where titled fools and wealthy mountebanks had welcome entrance, where they were cajoled, flattered, and fawned upon, the gifted artist dared not venture; could he have claimed descent from the bastard progeny of a king, the Cerberus-guarded doors might have yielded, but, being the son of an honest mechanic, there

was no admittance, he must keep his place at the foot of the ladder.

And how did the Lady Blanche, she who was placed so high in the world of fashion, ever come to dream of this man's existence? To her he should have remained a human atom, a mere clod, a toiling hind. What business had he to obtrude on her gaze, to pass before her with his majestic presence, and grand and stately bearing? What business had he to lift those powerful eyes to her face, almost scaring her with their impassioned glances, and calling the quick blood to brow and cheek, as her own fell beneath his gaze?

Ah! what business has the needle turning to the pole? Who can solve the

mystery of that invisible link that binds true heart to heart, wakening to sweetest melody the silent chords that only the one hand can unloose, unsealing the charmed fountain that only one touch can unlock. The true loving heart, untrammelled by the formalities of station and class, will as easily find its mate as the carrier-dove its destination; free it from the galling fetters of place and circumstance and it will seek and find the kindred heart that awaits it. Oh! dwarf not the free growth of human love, curb not the glorious impulse, nor check the aspirations of an impassioned soul.

Lady Blanche thought it no degradation to listen to the outpourings of the artist's love, the language he uttered was well

understood, though it should have been heard amid trellised vines beneath Italian skies, rather than in the dusk shade of an English twilight. Eloquent were the pleadings that fell from those lips, and the matchless skill with which his claim was urged seemed to admit of no discouraging reply. With burning words, in the face of difficulties apparently insurmountable, he pressed his suit; he cared not for the overwhelming power arraigned against him; her pomp, her wealth, with all its vast influence, her noble birth. Never did prisoner at the bar boast of abler advocate. More to him than life itself was the interest at stake, and nobly did the artist plead for all that could render life dear, the priceless boon of her undivided love.

"Oh, Blanche, I have listened in vain for some response," he continued; "and yet, dearest, your silence tells me that your heart has been my most willing advocate; you will not, nor dare not, bid me despair, the lips that speak my doom must seal your own fate."

"Henry," she replied, "you know full well that to rob your heart of happiness would be to deprive mine of its only solace. Most dearly-loved, does that love not suffice? honoured and reverenced, as we honour and reverence the good and great, will the homage thus freely rendered not satisfy your desires?"

With her pleading eyes lifted fondly to his face she waited in silence for his reply; tremulous with passionate emotion the

parted lips and beseeching gaze sued for pity and compassion.

It was no fault of hers if the strong chains that bound her and held her captive to the tyrant custom yielded not to her fragile strength, she could not rive the ponderous fetters, and, in defiance of the world's scorn and contumely, turn aside from the beaten path. She might love in secret, hoarding up that love in the inmost recesses of her heart, treasuring it as a priceless gem to brighten and yet embitter many an hour.

Henry Mortimer knew well the conflicting feelings with which she warred, he knew too well that her conscience was more or less perverted by false training and unrighteous teaching, that in defiance

of her own sense of what was right she sacrificed her feelings in obedience to parental authority, and offered herself up a victim to deception and fraud. Had Blanche been less ignorant she would have recognised and asserted the promptings of her own pure nature, she would have confessed that she dared not even at a father's mandate stifle the noblest aspirations of her heart, and bend in mocking homage before a worthless idol, but, alas! the false and unscrupulous reasoning had done its work, and the blinded judgment must carry out the sentence, dooming two lives to misery and despair.

The priceless wealth of her love was *not* sufficient, the love that must be hoarded in secret, hid away like a stolen jewel,

thought of with shame, and fear, and guilty terror—was *that* a love to render back in return for the brave noble heart that only beat for her? Henry strove to stifle the reproachful feeling that her words called forth, and after all, it was not the Lady Blanche that he condemned, but the iniquitous system of which she was the dupe. That system with its vile code of laws that shall yet be trampled in the dust.

Oh, for a second Moses to dash to pieces the tables containing the testimony of the world's legislators.

Why did the peer's daughter linger beneath those screening boughs like a thing of guilt, why did she not walk forth with her true protector, her soul's mate, her un-

wedded husband, and confront the staring crowds?

"Woe to the hands that would loose such bands.
And the hearts that would part such love."

Although no white-stoled priest had pronounced their benediction, nor trained choir chanted a blessing on their union, yet unless true love be a mockery, and passion a pretence, the artist and Lady Blanche were:

"True husband and true wife."

Only in the gathering darkness might she rest in his embrace, and receive his kiss of love, tantalising him with her soft blandishments, and at the same time torturing him by protesting that she dared not disobey her parents, that they had chosen for her, and she must abide by their

decision. In a few weeks she would be married to Sir Percy Douglas, a man she hated and despised, nay, loathed with all that was good and true in her nature; and Blanche was born to be a good and true woman; alas for those who sold her for rank and profitless wealth!

A few minutes more, and they must part, farther than from pole to pole was the line of separation that divided them; he must return to his dingy studio amongst the densely populated streets, to dream of the bliss denied to him for ever, and she to the brilliant saloons of her superb mansion, to listen once more to the hollow flatteries of her unloved admirer. A few minutes—how the very essence of a life-time is compressed in that brief period, how the

seconds are told out as if from a miser's clutch. Dearly prized are the last minutes of the loved and dying.

To the doomed culprit waiting in trembling hope for a respite, how priceless each passing moment! to him one second may bring life or death.

Oh, for another hour beneath the leaf-draped tree! Why did not the setting sun stand still in the crimson west, and the dying day linger in its departure? A few more words of fervent entreaty.

"Oh, Blanche, Blanche, I plead not for myself alone, I plead for your happiness, a far higher consideration to me than my own. Dearest and best beloved! Can you with pure intent fling yourself into the debauched embrace, and share the

lewd caresses, of one that you hate and abhor? Blanche, assert your woman's rights, and before Heaven give yourself to the man who holds your heart in his deathless keeping! oh, do not deny my prayer!"

But she dared not respond to his agonised appeal, and for Henry Mortimer all hope had passed for ever. To him it seemed as if the avenging angel proclaimed that time should be no longer.

CHAPTER II.

BLANCHE'S RESISTANCE.

"Perhaps the stricken deer may win."

THE Earl of St. Clyde, descended from a long line of distinguished ancestors, and moreover a peer of the realm, held an exalted position amongst the nobles of his native land. Of strictly Conservative principles, he commended the good old saying, "let well enough alone," and sternly opposed everything bordering on change. It was all very well to talk of

progress, of amendment or social improvement, these words had no place in the Earl's vocabulary. If an earthquake had shaken England from north to south, or a volcanic eruption burst forth from one of her mountains, it could not have created a deeper feeling of surprise and horror, than the faintest whisper of any innovation.

Had he lived in the reign of the fourth George he would have prayed conscientiously every Sunday in his well-padded pew, for "our most *religious* and gracious king." So would he have prayed had King Herod or the Roman Nero occupied the British throne.

The powers that be, whether of good or evil, were sacred in his opinion, and never, under any circumstances, to be resisted.

No matter that distress and direst want were spreading like a pestilence throughout the land, that famine and sickness were making deadly havoc amongst the population, no remonstrance must be offered, the rude, unlettered hinds must bend submissively beneath the yoke, the law of the land must remain intact, despite the heart-wrung prayers of a discontented people.

"Give peace in our time, oh Lord!" the Earl of St. Clyde with many of his class could offer up that petition, yet who amongst them ever paused to consider the true meaning of the seemingly servile prayer. Not from their lips should the impressive aspiration ascend, let the starved artisan, the toil-worn mechanic wrestling with despair, the over-taxed

operative breathe forth that petition. Let the weaver at his loom, the miner in his living grave, the pale work-girl in her noisome garret, the trodden-down, long-suffering toilers, that noble army of martyrs, cry aloud for the peace so long denied to them. What care they if a hostile army were thundering on our shores, they who have so long battled with a fiercer enemy, better to meet a brave foeman face to face than to carry on a lifelong warfare against hunger and want? What could the proud patrician know of the people whom in his blind presumption he pretended to aid in governing?

Of the savage natives of some of the South Sea Islands, he might boast a little knowledge, righteously deploring their benighted

state, mourning over their heathen darkness, and even subscribing a goodly sum towards reclaiming them from paganism. The accounts of their squalor and nakedness were very trying to the sensitive and delicate feelings of this refined noble; were it not from fear of being accused of inconsistency, he might have voted a government supply to have been distributed as pin-money to the lightly-draped squaws, a costume consisting of a necklace of sea-shells, and a wedge of gold through the ear, was certainly open to censure, and something very like a blush overspread Lord St. Clyde's high-bred face, as he thought of the dusky limbs so innocent of raiment. Did his mind ever revert to the half-clad forms that trembled with cold

through the severity of a northern winter, were they defended against the bitter winds, the cruel frost and snow, and the mocking mirth that taunted their fluttering rags. The untaught savage, ignorant of the knowledge of good and evil, knew not that she was naked, and could boldly lave in the soft waters that surrounded her native isle; warmed by the sun's embraces, she needed not to swathe her athletic limbs in cumbrous folds, body and mind were alike free and untrammelled.

As the Earl assisted in governing the community, so did he strive to administer justice in his own household, dispensing the law he believed with the skill of a modern Draco or Solon. His authority

must remain unquestioned, against his decision there must be no appeal. Affection, love, interest, all must be crushed beneath the Juggernaut of his omnipotent will, in fact, even passive resistance was, in his eyes, a crime of no mean magnitude.

The Lady Blanche had incurred his displeasure by not cheerfully acquiescing in his selection of a husband for her. After separating from the artist it may readily be believed that her reception of the Baronet was anything but cordial; the strangely-averted eye and listless manner did not escape the vigilance of the Earl and Countess, and these tokens of a rebellious spirit had caused some uneasiness and much indignation, still of absolute resistance to authority they never dreamed;

there might be some slight hesitation on her part, perhaps a timidly-expressed wish to postpone for a brief time the period of her marriage, a short respite, but no lasting reprieve.

The Earl was seated in his library, talking the matter over with the Countess, and striving to overcome, by his wordy eloquence, a vague fear hitherto unfelt.

There had been something undefined in his daughter's manner on the previous evening, something of an aroused spirit in her bearing that surprised and perplexed him; the difficulty must be overcome at once; if any treasonable thought existed, better it should be crushed on the instant.

With a fainting heart Lady Blanche

obeyed the mandate that summoned her to the august presence of the governing power. She had expected the much-dreaded interview, knowing too well that her father was inexorable, and that in the Countess he would find a ready ally, and the defiant look that met her gaze as she entered the library was certainly not calculated to inspire her with a feeling of confidence.

How pretty she looked in her elegant morning dress! and, though the cheek was very pale, and the eye somewhat languid, yet in its clear depths there was a lurking glance of power and defiance, a warning look of remonstrance.

Lord St. Clyde motioned her to a seat, and then paused to reconsider the mode of

attack, it is possible that he thought his imposing air of command might have a beneficial effect, for, leaning back in his throne-like easy-chair, with his white effeminate hands suspended in a becoming attitude, he allowed some moments to elapse before breaking the ominous silence; perhaps the advantage was not all on his side, for it afforded Blanche time to collect her scattered thoughts, and prepare for what seemed destined to become a council of war.

"I have sent for you," he exclaimed "to demand an explanation of your extraordinary conduct of last night."

She looked at him with a strangely surprised stare, either ignorant of his meaning, or pretending to be at a loss to

comprehend him. The explanation was again demanded in a loud, and somewhat threatening voice, and there was an uneasy shifting in the regal chair, and a nervous quivering of the jewelled hand.

"I have nothing to explain," was the reply; "not being aware that there was anything unusual in my demeanour last night."

"Nothing unusual?" said the Earl. "Blanche, can you deny that your treatment of Sir Percy Douglas was cold and repulsive in the extreme?"

"Had it been otherwise," she retorted, "you might indeed accuse me of inconsistency; but oh, father, when did Sir Percy Douglas receive ought but coldness and aversion from me? Did you expect me to feign a love unfelt, a respect

undeserved, a feeling of esteem that he has no power to elicit? I have not yet fallen so low, only the good and worthy shall I love, respect, and esteem."

The upholder of the British constitution raised his hands in mute horror. Here was resistance under his own roof, rebellion on his own hearth, insurrection within the precincts of his stately home! This was worse than the hungry repinings of a set of starved Chartists, the muttered threats of a colony of discontented operatives; they could be met with fire and steel, a volley of musketry, or a sabre thrust could stifle the famine cry; but a harder task beset him now, the haughty aristocrat must stoop to use the weapons of persuasion and entreaty.

"I was not prepared for this," he observed; "in my choice of a husband for you, I have selected one well worthy of your love and esteem, if you *must* use these somewhat obsolete terms. Sir Percy can boast of wealth, rank, and powerful influences; he is young, considered handsome, high-bred, and a man of the world. Blanche, are these qualifications not sufficient for you, would you desire a higher match?"

"I would," she returned, with lurid cheek, and flashing eye; "I would seek to mate with one as far above the man you have chosen for me as Heaven is above earth. When did wealth, and rank, and powerful influence awaken love or respect in any human breast? Love may be an

obsolete term in your vocabulary, father, even love towards your defenceless child, yet it is as existing as the everlasting hills, eternal as the life-time of the Almighty."

"What unseemly language," interrupted the Countess; "you have now been out two seasons, Blanche, and had we failed to secure this rich prize for you, it is difficult to say how long you might have remained on our hands, perhaps to have been given a bargain in the end. You should congratulate yourself on having become the envy of half the town, think of the splendid destiny that awaits you, your superb mansion in London, your box at the opera, your magnificent castle in Scotland; horses, equipage, diamonds—in fact

all that the heart could desire; Blanche, are you not a little unreasonable?"

The Countess spoke according to her own convictions, she could no more have understood the feelings that actuated her daughter than she could have deciphered a page of Arabic, or solved a problem in Euclid; she had played in the game of life, and having won the Right Honourable the Earl of St. Clyde, with half the letters of the alphabet tacked to his name, was desirous that Blanche should follow her example, and grasp the prize within her reach.

How many had languished and pined for the brilliant match that was thrust on her reluctant child, what plotting and scheming had been carried on, what despe-

rate efforts to storm the now captured citadel. Fathers, mothers, daughters, all had been engaged in the conspiracy, and bitter was the feeling of envy and disappointment when it became known that Lady Blanche Howard was the chosen bride. It mattered not that the rich Baronet had run a career of dissipation, that his tastes were low and mean, that his intellect was dwarfed, and his understanding depraved, such matters were not to be spoken of; it was not necessary that the woman he was to marry should know anything of his antecedents; but it so happened that rumours of the life he had led had reached Blanche's ears, and the indifference with which she at first regarded him turned to abhorrence.

She scarcely hoped to enlist her father's sympathies in her behalf, but desperation emboldened her to make one last effort to effect her release. At another time she might have feared to incur his displeasure, now she feared nothing but the hateful doom from which she sought escape.

With tears, with prayers, with earnest entreaties she strove to have the cruel sentence reversed, to free herself from the fearful chain that coiled round her.

Under any circumstances she would have shrunk from the idea of giving herself to Sir Percy Douglas; but now that her heart was in the possession of Henry Mortimer, that she loved him with an overwhelming love, how could she falsely wed another?

"You have urged me to commit a crime," she said, addressing the Earl; "and whatever the consequences of that crime may be, remember *you* must answer for them. I tell you, father, that the Roman who butchered his daughter in the public shambles to save her from a tyrant's lust, did a righteous deed; compare his act with yours. In defiance of the feelings of hatred and repugnance with which I regard this man, you seek to bind me to him. Oh, better far to chain me to a festering corpse! You sell *me* to the highest bidder, and yet with tearful eyes and quivering lips protest against the slave-owner who auctions his trembling victim to the debauched planter!"

"A strange difference," remonstrated his

lordship; "I do an act of kindness in mating you with a rich and great man."

"So thinks the slave-master," she interrupted; "it is well to change from toiling in the dismal rice swamp and cotton plantation to the soft luxuriance of the southern planter's home. Father, the comparison places you at a disadvantage."

With a burst of tears she flung herself at his feet, praying and beseeching of him to spare her even yet; but no hope appeared in that cold proud face. God help thee, Blanche! Why not burst the galling fetters of custom and worldly propriety, and boldly claim thy birthright, better than to crouch at the footstool of one of earth's tyrants, gazing upwards with that white scared face? She looked around her

with such a beseeching glance as the patriarch's son may have worn when bound for sacrifice; but alas no voice from Heaven interceded for her—no other victim could be substituted in her stead.

CHAPTER III.

A PAGE FROM THE HISTORY OF SIR PERCY DOUGLAS.

"Work, work, work
Through the long December night;
And work, work, work
When the weather is warm and bright."

THE city clocks had struck twelve, and still the toilers bent over their work.

The season was now at its height, and between drawing-rooms, fêtes, and balls, the court milliners and dressmakers had their hands amply filled. From seven

o'clock in the morning the labour had continued, and now in the lonely midnight the weary fingers still plied their task.

The hot stifling atmosphere of the workroom was anything but conducive to wakefulness, and the pale cheeks grew yet paler under the oppressive influence of the almost pestilential air.

It was a sad sight to note the half-sinking forms and heavy eyes; the awful tragedy enacting within those glaring walls. Could any one have marked unmoved the contrast between the toilers and their work?

Here a young girl with hectic cheeks and blazing eye was twining festoons of roses to deck a lustrous robe; how the poor white fingers trembled amid the bright

petals, and the tortured form almost writhed with weariness.

Chaplets, and wreaths, and chatelaines of flowers were strewn around, amongst heaps of burnished satin and delicate lace. Little did the destined wearers of those gorgeous fabrics think of the toil expended on each robe. Wrapt in soft slumber on their luxurious couches, they dreamed not that health and strength were sacrificed in administering to their vanity, that young forms were diseased from want of rest, and bright eyes dimmed by endless labour. The work of destruction must continue, and if the dress-maker faints from over-exertion, a cup of strong green tea will recall her to life and consciousness; it matters not that the liquid poison is

sapping her health, and hurrying her to an early grave. Let no dream of the poor white slave mar the slumbers of "my lady" as she rests beneath the broidered coverlit, let no phantom of the struggling victim obtrude on her sight as she reposes her delicate limbs on the soft down.

Some of the work-girls ventured to offer a remonstrance on being so shamefully overtasked, but these were new hands, some of them fresh importations from the country, and retaining still some traces of their rustic origin; though comparatively strong and healthy, the late hours tried them more severely than the more experienced workers. Poor things! how they dozed over their needles, and stole short snatches of rest, only to start up

with frightened faces to recommence their dreary task.

One young girl, very pale and very beautiful—aye, beautiful, and nearly colourless as a marble statue—sat dreaming over a bright azure dress; she was studding it with pearls, and looping up the fleece-like drapery with sprays of jessamine. Three times had she fainted, but as soon as the poisonous restorative was administered she was obliged to return to the work of adornment, for there were no fingers so skilful as hers, no taste so exquisite.

With a sigh that told more of sorrow than of actual weariness, Mary Lennox arranged the white blossoms—it was no dew-drop that glittered on the jessamine stars—but she had neither time to indulge in fruitless

sorrow, nor leisure to recall the remembrances of her early home, she must

"Breast despair, as swimmers breast the wave,"

and, burying vain regrets, toil on with her feeble strength to win a wretched pittance.

As the clock struck one the work-room emptied, and the poor, weary girls, set free for a few hours, sought their homes through the almost deserted streets. Wrapping her scanty shawl round her shoulders, Mary Lennox pursued her way, shunning as best she could the belated stragglers who strove to intercept her progress. Though the early morning was soft and warm, yet the change into the pure air from the sickly temperature of the work-room caused her to tremble with a sense of chilliness. She had a long dis-

tance to walk before her squalid home could be reached, for Mary was very poor, and obliged to live far from the aristocratic quarter where the prosperous court-dressmaker resided.

After she had passed through several streets she became conscious that some person was dogging her steps, but, too much terrified to glance behind her, continued her course with a quickened pace. Gradually her pursuer gained on her, till at length, with a firm grasp, he arrested her progress, and the horror-stricken girl perceived that it was no drunken straggler that thrust himself on her notice. She saw at once that he was a gentleman, if a free, insolent bearing, fine clothes, and diamond studs give a claim to that title,

yet far sooner would she have encountered the stealthy footpad or midnight robber.

Mary Lennox strove to release herself from his strong hold, but Sir Percy Douglas was not so easily evaded, the white dove may rend its plumage, but never can it escape from the serpent's coils.

With a pretended concern for her safety, which imposed too well on the innocent girl, the Baronet explained to her the danger of walking by night unprotected through the streets, and he furthermore informed her that her youth and beauty had so interested him that, fearful of her being molested in any way, he had, night after night, followed her unobserved. Seeing the advantage he had gained, Sir

Percy begged that she would enlighten him with respect to her mode of life and future prospects, adding, that it was the most earnest wish of his heart to befriend her. The grateful and unsuspecting girl gave him a full account, not only of her present trials, but with an earnest simplicity that might have touched a less hardened profligate, of her former history and the sad occurrences of her brief life.

The latter details did not interest the Baronet nearly so much as the recital of the events of her present unhappy life; he listened eagerly to the sad story of privations daily and hourly endured, his wicked face displaying no feeling of sympathy, but rather a look of fiendish exultation, as

Mary Lennox told of her poverty, her loneliness, and her failing health. With a smile of triumph he heard of her home in a wretched garret, of the fireless hearth, and the insufficiency of food and clothing, of the incessant toil that was shortening the victim's life.

With words of subtle meaning, and in low thrilling tones, he revealed his iniquitous purpose; very gentle were the whispered accents, so free from coarseness or intended insult. He spoke to her of her surpassing beauty, of the deep love with which she had inspired him, and implored of her with passionate eloquence to accept the home he now offered her.

"I ask you to exchange a career of toil

and misery for an existence of real enjoyment," he continued. "Were *you* born to live and die in obscurity, with your queen-like beauty and noble grace? Oh, Mary, think of the home I would provide for you, and compare it with your present squalid habitation. All that the most refined taste can desire, or wealth can purchase, shall be yours; costly dresses, and priceless jewels, something better than this," laying his hand on her threadbare shawl; "rarest furs and velvets, to shield my darling from the winter's cold, and delicate lace-like drapery for summer wear."

Mary listened in silence, that is to say, no words escaped her lips, but she wept convulsively, and yet, despite her grief, Sir Percy saw that there was no expression of

indignation in her sorrow, thus emboldened he proceeded:

"Listen to me while I give you a description of the home that awaits you, far from the heart of this dreary city. The picturesque cottage which is already prepared for you is surrounded by a deeply-cultivated landscape; for I guessed, Mary, that a rural habitation would best suit your desires; the front of the house is covered with beautiful evergreens, and the gardens and conservatory are filled with rarest flowers. Within the cottage all has been chosen that taste could desire, the furniture, pictures, articles of vertû, are all faultless. But the gem of the dwelling is the boudoir which I have had prepared for your own especial use and enjoyment. I

am a poor hand at descriptions of upholstery, but you must forgive my blundering mistakes, whilst I tell you of the rich Persian carpet, the gold-panelled walls, the cherry-coloured and lace curtains, with their girdles of white rose wreaths. There my darling shall rest after her weary labours, surrounded by a very atmosphere of love."

"Oh, cease," the weeping girl exclaimed; "I do wrong to listen to you, for the misery of my lot is only aggravated by the picture you bring before me. Think of what I endure, and yet better virtue with rags, than infamy and splendour."

"Virtue," he returned with a low laugh; "who cares for virtue, heroism, self-sacrifice? Were you to immolate

yourself on the world's shrine, deserving as your meed a crown of martyrdom, you would only be scoffed at. Grasp the happiness within your reach, and, although no smooth-tongued parson pronounces the nuptial benediction, I shall be true to you whilst life remains."

"Aye, true to me," she replied, "so long as the toy pleases, but as soon as the gilding wears off to be replaced by some newer fancy, and cast away as a tarnished jewel. Oh! Sir Percy, how could I reckon on your constancy, when no law, human or divine, sanctifies our union?"

"Are human laws so binding," he rejoined, "that you would covet the legal fetter? Does the chain not fret, and chafe, and torture, until the maddened victims often procure

liberty through the generous aid of the divorce court. You have some sense, Mary, and to that sense I now appeal. Would you prefer being joined in what is termed holy matrimony, with a man that you could not be certain of loving, or worse still, that you could not be assured of loving you? You may fancy that the passion with which he has at present inspired you may last undimmed while life remains, but time alone can decide on that point. Suppose then, that a coldness arises, that the 'cloud not bigger than a man's hand' overspreads the horizon, and that indifference, contempt, hatred, usurp the place of love and passion, would it be well, I say, to be legally bound to one that could call forth such feelings, to know that 'until death us do part,' according to the

Church's ritual you must belong to him, be part of him, 'ye twain, one flesh,' never to be divided through long years of living death; or, on the other hand, should he weary of you, gazing with cold indifferent eyes, taking no more delight in your grace and loveliness, and shunning you with ill-dissembled dislike seek some other idol, would *you* live through long years of bitter agony bound hopelessly to one who mocks your love and forbids any expression of its warmth? Would *you* seek to pillow your head on that treacherous breast, or court the oft-denied caresses? Mary, let your wisdom assert itself unbiassed by the sophistries of enslaved custom, and the world's opinion."

"There may be reason in what you have

said," she rejoined, "but you imagine an extreme case; all marriages are not miserable."

"No marriage is one of unalloyed bliss," he quickly interrupted; "listen then, Mary, to reason, and do not from an absurd deference to the usages of society place beyond your grasp the happiness for which you may yet sigh in vain. Do not fear that I shall ever change to you, my own love, nor refuse the sought-for caresses; your sweet lips only shall I kiss, and only on your soft bosom shall I pillow my head. I do not ask you to decide hastily, nor would I take any undue advantage of your poverty and desolation. I would only remind you of your life of hopeless drudgery from which I alone can rescue

you. Do not think hardly of me, dearest; if pity for your sorrows and compassion for your unhappy lot be crimes, then, indeed, you may condemn me."

With a manner almost deferential in its display of respect, the Baronet took leave of his intended victim.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE GARRET.

"On that night a star fell from heaven."

WITH her mind in a state of strange bewilderment Mary Lennox sought the wretched attic she called her home, and laying aside her faded bonnet and shawl, sat down to try and collect her shattered thoughts. Her ideas were all afloat, broken from their anchorage, and as difficult to right as a vessel drifted from her moorings. Her very notions of right and

wrong seemed to have gone astray, and a kind of waking nightmare oppressed and benumbed her brain. Gradually the mist dissolved, and her mental vision cleared, so that she could look steadily in the face of realities.

Had ten years passed over her head they might have failed to produce a greater change than that caused by the events of the last hour. The Mary Lennox who had trudged to her daily toil, spiritless and hopeless, was a totally different person to the excited girl who now crouched beside the fireless hearth; something of contempt and hidden disgust was displayed in the half-petulant manner with which she glanced at the squalid misery that surrounded her. The fragments of the

morning meal still remained on the broken table, but had she been accustomed to regale on the costliest viands, and to quaff the rarest wines, she could not have recoiled more from the idea of tasting the unsavoury morsels of coarse bread, or drinking the uninviting compound composed of cheap tea and diluted milk. Even the delft cup and saucer, with their gaudy patterns, were as offensive to her sight, as if her food had been hitherto served on the most delicate china. The very sense of hunger seemed to have left her, or else she had, in imagination, feasted to repletion. Many a night had she lain down, almost with a feeling of gratitude, on her wretched pallet, but she would rest her tired limbs there no longer; the ugly mis-

shapen bedstead was odious in her eyes, so were the well-worn blankets and tattered coverlet. Everything that met her vision seemed disfigured and distorted, she could scarcely realise the fact that the dingy garret was the same that she had left a few hours before. Rising from her seat she opened a small chest of drawers, a world too large for her scanty wardrobe, and commenced a minute examination of the contents. A washed-out muslin dress, well patched and darned, was first unfolded; this was her best dress, and designed for holiday wear, a cheap collar encircled the neck, fastened with a bow of sixpenny ribbon, but it was hastily thrown aside as a vision of the "lace-like drapery for summer wear" rose on her dazed sight.

She next scrutinised a dyed, but still very dingy-looking mantle, with its border of imitation swan's-down, but it was soon consigned to the drawer as she thought of the "rare furs and velvets to screen her from the winter's cold." The brooch of paste and tarnished gilding, the bracelet of ruby glass with its rim of transparent pearls, were flung aside with a vehemence that threatened to impair the glittering baubles, for, to the enraptured imagination of Mary Lennox appeared a richly-burnished morocco case, with its pure white satin cushion containing jewels of the purest water and rarest value.

Closing the drawers hastily, she turned to resume her seat, but in passing the cracked looking-glass that was suspended

on a nail near her bed, something there caused her to start with a look of surprised delight.

Gazing into the little mirror she saw a face of most surpassing beauty, she saw a cheek that burned and glowed with the fire of excitement, eyes full, dark and luminous, a crimson lip, and hair black as night.

Was *this* the pale work-girl who had arranged her simple toilet so lately, before the tell-tale glass, this the white wan shadow, the fleshless and colourless ghost that used to haunt the wretched attic? Feasting her eyes on her strange loveliness Mary Lennox wondered much that no thought of these charms had ever before occurred to her; she did not know that

never during her life had she looked so beautiful; she indeed was changed, though she fancied that only her miserable surroundings wore altered forms. The life that had been spoken of, the refinements that were so lavishly offered, accorded well with the innate delicacy of her own ideas, and called forth the taste that had nearly famished for lack of food.

Oh! *who* could blame her if she contrasted the naked floor with the softly-carpeted boudoir, or in fancy draped the bleared windows with silken hangings, looped up with white rose fetters? Who could blame her if the patched counterpane gave place, in her imagination, to the costly coverlet, and the bed of straw to pillows of down? She knew well that she

was out of place in that poor abode, that her stately beauty was not in keeping with the rickety table, and broken chair; the want of harmony between them jarred on her bewildered mind. No doubt it was very wrong in Mary to indulge in such rebellious thoughts, but indeed they had scarcely shaped themselves into thoughts, they were merely crude ideas surging through her brain. Never before had such a spirit of mutiny risen in her breast, never before had she felt so much inclined to war against her fate, to question the injustice of the system that had doomed her to a life of sterile misery. Why should she toil a willing slave, whilst others revelled in a life of luxurious ease? Why should *she* faint by the way-side

whilst her more favoured sisters gathered flowers?

Dangerous questions these—chinks in the prison wall through which the slanting sunbeams enter; let the light stream in till the full knowledge of her abject fate breaks on the captive's sight.

Mary Lennox knew that the boundary line in her life had been passed, that to return to her former state of mind would be a moral impossibility.

She must determine on one of two courses, she must either consent to live with Sir Percy Douglas, or continue to pursue her dreary calling as a dress-maker's assistant; hard as the latter course had always appeared to her, it was doubly so now, for the ray of light that had

penetrated into her prison cell, revealed all too clearly in its hideous truthfulness the wretchedness of her fate.

I suppose her spirit should have aroused itself in angry defiance at the Baronet's offer, she should have stormed, and raged, and delivered an eloquent panegyric on the sublimity of virtue and morality, clasped destitution to her breast, embraced the thoughts of penury, and glorying in her self-denying chastity flung the insult back in his teeth. All this would have been very sublime, but Mary's character being wanting in sublimity, she coolly sat down to deliberate on what course she should pursue.

We all know the hackneyed saying that the woman who deliberates is lost; if that

be true I fear there are a great many lost sheep, countless stragglers from the fold.

Do those esteemed personages who so often quote the parrot-cry, ever take the trouble to consider the adverse modes of life that call for deliberation—the life of ease and enjoyment on the one hand, and the laborious life of toil on the other? It is very easy for those antiquated virgins, those saintly hypocrites, to pronounce a judgment on their erring sisters, to pelt with hard names, to shower down on them such wordy missiles as guilt, infamy, prostitution. If they understood Scotch I would

> "Whisper in their lugs
> They're aiblins nae temptation!"

But I may remind them in plain English that one who was above all sin, the

Master and Judge of the universe, pronounced no such condemnation when He was left with the woman standing in the midst. Alas, how often is it so! the world scorns them, friends fall off, and desert them, till they are *left alone with God!*

The young dress-maker reviewed the events of her simple life, recalling to remembrance her early home where so many happy days had passed.

Her father had rented a small farm, but falling into difficulties the landlord dispossessed him, and he was turned adrift on the world. Unable to combat with sorrow, he soon sank into a premature grave, and Mary was left destitute.

Her mother died while she was an infant, and having neither brothers nor

sisters, she was without friends or kindred; a waif on the world's wide ocean, not one hand was extended to aid her, and hitherto the battle of life had been fought alone. If Sir Percy's overtures had aroused no indignation in her breast, it was not from lack of virtuous feeling; under more prosperous circumstances she would have probably repulsed him with decorous anger, denouncing him as a seducer; but her famished heart yearned for human sympathy, the sympathy that had been denied to her until now, and she naturally clung to the first person who had ever expressed compassion for her sufferings, and an interest in her fate.

If pity be allied to love, so is gratitude, and the warm heart of the generous girl

bounded with a sensation of deep thankfulness towards the man who from his lofty position could give a thought to her.

It is true that at first his somewhat insolent and assured manner terrified her, but Sir Percy being an adept in his art, soon perceived that in order to win the simple country girl, he must display an amount of tenderness altogether foreign to his nature. The town-bred girls would have bandied words with him, returning insolence for audacity, and smiled at him with painted lips in approval of his tempting offers. The splendours he proffered would have appealed to their vanity and love of display, and been prized merely as so much money's worth; but Mary Lennox thought not of the

intrinsic value of the gifts to be lavished on her; she would accept them in accordance with her innate love of refinement, that exquisite taste for the beautiful that belongs to neither station nor class.

How often had she yearned for a country life amid embowering trees, for flowers, and books, and paintings, for the elegancies and luxuries of life; and now that they were within reach, could she with fevered and thirsty lip refuse to quaff the delicious draught? There was little need for any further deliberation on the matter; her resolve was soon formed, and unhesitatingly she would barter a life of dreary monotony for an existence of pleasure and enjoyment. If

she erred, no human being save herself would be the sufferer, no kindred face would ever blush at mention of her name; accountable to none, she was free to follow the dictates of her own feelings.

She looked once more round that poor home, and in spite of its shabby misery, the tears filled her eyes as she remembered how often it had afforded her at least a shelter; and now that she was about to leave it for ever, a feeling of remorse arose in her breast.

She would resume her labours for one day more, but how light would they seem to her now, knowing that this toil would soon be ended. She was to meet Sir Percy at night, and give him the reply he so fully expected.

Worn out with watching and excitement, she at length slept, and was soon wrapped in a sweeter dream than any that had ever before visited her rugged bed.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE BALL-ROOM.

"Hot from the hands promiscuously applied,
Round the slight waist, and down the glowing side,
Where were the rapture then to clasp the form
From this lewd grasp, and lawless contact warm?"

THE brilliant saloons of the Countess of St. Clyde were crowded by the *élite* of London society. The noble mansion was lighted up with the utmost splendour, and the princely hospitality of the noble host and hostess (I quote from the *Morning Post*) was the theme of every tongue.

Well worthy of the occasion, and of the event it was intended to honour, was the entertainment. When a national victory has been won, a joyful and exultant people display their triumphant feelings by giving fêtes, and balls, and costly banquets, and why should not Lord and Lady St. Clyde celebrate *their* victory? They had out-manœuvred match-making fathers and mothers; planned, and plotted, and schemed in order to ensure a triumph. They had captured, not a beleaguered citadel, nor a cannon-guarded fortress, it is true, but by the might of their powerful prowess, their invincible stratagems, they could boast the prouder deed of bearing off from rival forces one of the best matches of the day.

No wonder that from roof to basement, the walls of their stately dwelling seemed a sheet of flame—illuminations generally follow great victories; that over the massive portico an arch of flowers and evergreens was suspended, and corridors, halls, and galleries were filled with the conservatory's rarest treasures. In the ball-room the white marble pillars were entwined with wreaths, intermixed with fairy lamps that gleamed like jewels amid the rich foliage. The walls were hung with the costliest velvet draperies with deep golden borders.

All that could gratify the senses were there in profusion—music, perfumes, and brilliant lights, and lovely forms moving in time to the gay strains.

The Lady Blanche, the heroine of the night, had never looked more charming; the azure robe with its setting of pearls and jessamine wreaths became her well (there were no tear-drops *now* on the snowy sprays); so did the excited look that fired her eye with such strange beauty, and made her cheeks flame as if scorched by a furnace-blast.

She knew now that her doom was fixed, and that there existed no hope of the sentence being reversed. Her approaching marriage was a settled thing, and every one in that brilliant assemblage looked on her as the destined bride of Sir Percy Douglas. Who so envied, and flattered, and admired as the Lady Blanche? her unsuccessful rivals regarded her with

sentiments of ill-disguised jealousy as she passed before them in her almost regal splendour, and even the proud Earl bestowed on her a grim smile of approval. Little did they know of the bursting heart that throbbed beneath the cerulean robe, with its wild heaving rustling the flowers on her bosom as if a breeze were passing over them; yet the stately step and commanding presence revealed nothing of the inward struggle. With a desperate effort she maintained a quiet composure, and the manner generally so sombre was now almost lively with assumed cheerfulness. Too proud to display her sufferings to the eyes of others, her soul's anguish was endured in secret, clasped to her bosom like the asp that preyed on the vitals of

the Egyptian queen. She wanted no pity, no sympathy from the crowd, and would have smiled on a bed of torture.

The Earl and Countess were well pleased with their daughter's dutiful demeanour; they could discern no symptom of revolt, nor lawless resistance to their will; she seemed to enter heartily into the gaiety of the ball-room, and to positively enjoy the scene.

The night was soft and warm, a night for sensual delight, for love, for strains of exquisite music, for flowers—in short, a very dangerous kind of night, and one of rather mischievous tendencies. Doubtless the luscious perfumed atmosphere had some magnetic influence on the dancers; the air of the hot summer's night was

fruitful of pleasant thoughts, suggestive of exquisite enjoyments. The lightly-draped nymphs with their happy partners almost floated in that fragrant atmosphere, keeping time with their mute caresses to the loud-surging music. How the daughters of England's nobles flew round the enchanted circle, clinging to their favoured supporters with an amount of energy of which the fair creatures seemed incapable. How the white-gloved hand rested on the shoulder, and the throbbing breast heaved against the companion's bosom! These delicate beings never objected to being clasped in such amorous coils, they could lift their passion-laden eyes unblushingly to meet the lustful gaze that burned with savage fire; in their

child-like innocence they knew not that they were feeding unholy desires, and rousing unhallowed passions. Let the white bosom surge against the lewd heart that pants with fevered longing, and the jewelled arm cling to the protecting shoulder; let the revellers whirl round in the maddening dance if they will, clasped in a sensual embrace, but let them not dare to denounce those erring sisters who are only separated from them by a brick wall. If the poor outcasts are guilty in deed, so in thought are the aristocratic daughters of our land. Whited sepulchres! how do their snowy robes, their shimmering pearls, belie the heart's foulness! Of course they are free to select the dances that please them best; being fond of

novelty, if they should desire to introduce the war-dance or the scalp-dance of the American Indian, no one could gainsay them, nor object to the startling innovation; but honesty of purpose forbids their condemning others, and priding themselves on their immaculate purity and virtue.

To think of the men who clasp these fragile creatures in their embraces, gloating over their charms with unbridled lust; no wonder that the Lady Blanche feigned weariness in order to escape from the lavish caresses of Sir Percy Douglas. Quitting the ball-room, she entered a small apartment hung round with the choicest paintings; the walls contained only the favourites of the Earl, who was a great connoisseur, or fancied himself one, which

was as good. There were dingy old masters, with very deep shades, but by no means lavish in their display of lights; the subjects were sombre, and of course required to be executed accordingly, still a gleam of sunshine, or even a ray of moonlight struggling through a cloud, would have been a vast improvement to the deep hues on the cracked canvas. Their being rare and expensive were their chief attractions, the difficulty of obtaining them increasing their value in no small degree. The Earl's tastes were certainly not of an exalted order; they were whimsical, unique, nay, in some things positively ugly. He had been known to lavish fabulous prices on most hideous articles of vertû, of curious and elaborate workmanship. I be-

lieve he would have parted with half a year's rental for a specimen of the forbidden fruit! Amongst the chef-d'œuvres that adorned the apartment was one painting that seemed as if placed there by accident, it was so totally different from the others; the lines were not mellowed by age, but fresh, clear, and warm—the subject the Madonna and Infant Saviour. An admiring group had paused before this painting, and the Earl, in his capacity as chaperon, was expatiating on its many beauties, pointing out the exquisite grace of the Virgin's form, and the bewitching expression of the full soft eyes beaming with love and adoration.

"This," said his lordship, "is the production of a young and most promising

artist, one who bids fair to rise in his profession."

"An Englishman, I presume?" interrupted one of the party addressed.

"The artist is not only an Englishman, but resides in London," was the reply; "his name, I believe, is Henry Mortimer, the son of a mechanic, who in spite of many difficulties contrived to cultivate his genius. It is a noble painting, and the young man deserves to be encouraged. Blanche," addressing his daughter, who with Sir Percy had joined the group, "I shall certainly have your likeness taken by this artist; you have no objection, I presume?"

Objection? Does the parched traveller object to taste the spring in the desert's

oasis, or to rest his wearied limbs beneath the shady palm tree ?

Blanche's heart bounded with ecstasy as she listened to her father's suggestion, but there was no outward evidence of happiness as she replied that nothing could afford her more gratification than to sit to the young artist.

Sir Percy was quite elated at the idea, and an animated conversation followed relative to the most becoming attitude and costume. The Earl suggested a heavy velvet dress, his taste inclining to the sombre; the dense shades of funereal drapery would have pleased him well. However, Blanche overruled this idea by saying that the artist was the best judge in these matters.

So it was settled that she should visit the studio of Henry Mortimer on the following morning, accompanied by Sir Percy Douglas. In a few minutes the picture gallery was deserted, the revellers once more resorting to the ball-room.

Through the painted glass doors leading to the conservatory, a gentleman and lady entered, unseen, and unobserved. These were Captain De Vere and Lady Alice Mowbray. Their marriage was to take place on the same day as Lady Blanche Howard's; but in this case how dissimilar were the feelings of the destined bride. Lady Alice loved the man of her choice; uninfluenced by parental coercion, and unbiased by worldly considerations of wealth and rank and exalted position, her

woman's heart had indeed found its mate, the carrier-dove had arrived at its destination. It is true that no career of splendour awaited her, no leading place in the world of fashion, yet she was contented to follow the fortunes of the young officer, and to be happy with him in whatever position he was destined to fill.

Both Lady Alice and her betrothed had a suspicion that the gaiety of Lady Blanche was merely assumed to conceal her aversion to the man who was so soon to claim her as his wife; knowing her purity and nobleness of feeling, and the utter worthlessness of Sir Percy, they could not believe that she entertained towards him any sentiment but one of utter contempt; and happy and contented with each other,

their young hearts sorrowed over the fate of one so beautiful and so good.

"If it were not too late," said Lady Alice, "I would even yet warn Blanche against taking this fatal step. Clarence, would my speaking to her on the subject be of any avail, or do you think my interference would be regarded in the light of an intrusion?"

"I fear the warning would be useless now," he returned; "you know, Alice, all has been arranged for the wedding, and even were Lady Blanche to be convinced of the unsuitability of the match, the Earl and Countess would insist on the fulfilment of the contract. It does sadden me to know that the day that will make me the happiest of men, will doom your gentle

friend to a life of misery; for, Alice, I cannot believe that Sir Percy is the man she would have chosen for a husband. I wish from my heart that escape were possible, for well I know that from this ill-starred marriage nought but evil can spring."

"Oh, Clarence," exclaimed his companion, "would not death be preferable to such a fate! What misery can equal that arising from a loveless union! to be compelled to bear this man's company at all times, to suffer his endearments, to feel the pressure of his hated lip, and to know that it was his privilege, his right to claim those caresses."

They had been strolling with arms entwined through the conservatory, stopping occasionally to inspect some rare plant

with its bright leaves glimmering in the light of the gorgeous lamps, or foreign flower of tropical lustre; to them earth seemed a path of roses, their future was clear and cloudless, if indeed they thought of any future, for to them the present hour was all-sufficient. Basking in the light of each other's smiles, clasped in a loving embrace, they seemed like Juan and Haidee in the soft Southern Isle :

> "To their young eyes
> Each was an angel, and earth Paradise."

They paused for a few moments under the shadow of a gigantic fern; like a mimic palm tree was the straight green stem with its feathery fronds. A perfect bank of scarlet flowers clustered beneath, of hue so vivid they seemed ablaze with brightness.

The appearance of Lady Alice contrasted well with the fiery constellation, forming as it did a magnificent background for her white dress, her raven hair, and dark oriental eyes—eyes brimful, surging over with love and passion. She seemed a creature of wondrous nature, impulsive, fearless, pure, and innocent as a child. Her disposition was one of prompt sympathies, resentful of oppression, no matter against whom directed. Listening to the recital of a tale of wrong her eloquent eyes would flash with momentary rage, and her heart leap like a sword from the scabbard.

To her God's suffering poor were the first objects in creation, far beyond the titled magnates of the land, their very

rials investing them with dignity. Who dared to insult the abject or the friendless in her pure presence! Let but a cry for pity, an entreaty for mercy reach her ear, and she would haste to the sufferer's rescue, though a fiery barricade crossed her path. This strong sense of justice, this revolt against oppression, roused in the young girl's spirit a very storm of resentment towards the parents of Lady Blanche, and her patient and unresisting compliance with their wishes increased her indignation.

Snatching one of the flaming blossoms with impetuous energy, she commenced rending the superb petals. It seemed that the occupation accorded well with her present tone of mind, for another shower of

burnished leaves descended amid the dark green foliage.

"To see her wearing that mask of falsehood on her face," she exclaimed; "to hear her cheerful voice, and gay laugh, when one knows that the poor heart is breaking. Oh, Clarence, I cannot endure it. I who stand on the threshold of a blissful life, where all seems bright and joyous, am I to witness unmoved the threatening cloud that looms over Blanche? Were it my case, I would sooner fling myself into the nearest river than into the arms of that bad unprincipled man."

"Heaven forbid that any arms but these should enfold you, my own treasure," replied Clarence De Vere, seizing the hand that had dealt so mercilessly with the

rifled flowers. "If Lady Blanche had but asserted her own rights, her father must in the end have acceded with her wishes; with all his pretended dignity and assumed hauteur, Lord St. Clyde appears to be a man of feeble purpose and shallow intellect, a man whose opposition would be anything but formidable."

"A strange thought has just occurred to me," said Lady Alice; "I wish I had been placed in a situation similar to that of Blanche, and beset with the same difficulties. How I should have gloried in defeating the machinations of a tyrant, in frustrating his schemes, and overturning his deep-laid plans. I know that parental authority is to be respected so long as it accords with the dictates of conscience, but

when a father chooses to act the part of a heartless tyrant I would trample his authority in the dust. If a down-trodden people rise in rebellion against oppression, should a weak defenceless woman submit to oppression? Imagine Joan of Arc, or Charlotte Corday, or Marie Antoinette bowing their proud spirits in obedience to a father's will!"

"Or Lady Alice Mowbray!" interrupted Clarence.

"Ay," she retorted, with a flashing eye and blazing cheek, "or Lady Alice Mowbray. You have guessed aright, Clarence; I would shed my heart's blood in vindication of honour and justice. How my soul rebels against the iniquity of the vile system that pollutes society: prostitution,

perjury, falsehood of the deepest dye, these are the patent vices of England's boasted aristocrats, for I hold and maintain that a loveless marriage is worse than prostitution. I speak plainly, Clarence, for I feel deeply, and I cannot select my words in accordance with the usages of polite society."

"Fiery words are the exponents of honest and vigorous thoughts," he rejoined; "and to me, dearest Alice, you can ever give utterance to your heart's dictates. Let us take a turn or two amid these superb plants and flowers, that you may compose your ruffled feelings before re-entering the ball-room."

The young lovers were again lost

amid the rich foliage, the white dress of Lady Alice Mowbray glittering here and there through the green pathway.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ARTIST'S STUDIO.

"I bless the generous fate
That gave no noble blood to swell my veins,
For had I from the hands of accident
Nobility received, I could not prove
The juster title to that high noblesse
No revolutions level nor destroy—
The true noblesse of genius and of worth."

THE painter was seated before his easel, putting some finishing touches to a landscape. The scene was a homestead amid the clearings of a forest of autumn-tinted trees.

Very exquisite were the soft lights that seemed to ripple amongst the burnished leaves. A young mother with a baby on her knee sat at the open door, half screened by the luxuriant roses twining around the latticed porch. Her attire was very homely, so as to be in keeping with the simple surroundings. Surely we have seen that face before, that winning smile, and those soft blue eyes seem strangely familiar. The Lady Blanche in a drugget petticoat and dress of printed calico! How lovely she looked, far surpassing the azure-draped figure that glided through the glittering ball-room! How the rapturous gaze of the young mother rested on *his* child! Ah, Henry, what vain dream is this? Will the painted vision of what

might have been serve to gladden the mournful reality, will the shadow be accepted for the substance? Not for *you* shall the expectant gaze peer through the gathering twilight—dream not that *your* child shall be clasped to that soft bosom, or word of welcome greet you from those lips.

What hours of intense agony had been passed before that canvas! the beautiful creation had been indeed brought forth through much mental travail; like the pearl-diver the artist had battled with fierce storms, ay, worse than those that lash the deep blue ocean. Love, jealousy, despair — oh, the wild tempest from whence that glorious inspiration sprang, the convulsive throes that gave it birth!

What maddening thoughts swept through the artist's brain as he lingered before the splendid conception, revelling in his self-inflicted torture and adding fuel to the burning fire that devoured him! What to him were those sweet lips, that glowing bosom, and those soft caressing arms? What to him those sunny tresses to which he is adding a deeper shade of gold? Oh, solemn mockery! Striving to cheat the senses with the pictured canvas.

So absorbed was Henry Mortimer with his occupation, he did not at first know that footsteps were approaching his solitary apartment, and not until the demand for admittance was twice repeated did he hasten to receive the unexpected visitors.

It would be difficult to say what feeling arose uppermost in his mind when he recognised in the intruders Sir Percy Douglas and Lady Blanche Howard. With an effort almost superhuman, he mastered his emotions sufficiently to invite their entrance, his presence of mind even prompting him to hastily draw a curtain over the nearly finished picture.

He saw at once that it was Lady Blanche's wish that they should meet as strangers, and he determined to act the *rôle* in accordance with her desires. It was with the *artist* that their business lay, and therefore the artist was too proud to overstep the boundary-line that separated them. With an air of most provoking insolence the Baronet informed Henry that

he had been so much pleased with some specimens of his genius, he was anxious that Lady Blanche should have her portrait taken, and that he was willing to be guided by him in the choice of attitude and costume. It appeared that the lady herself had no voice in the matter, for neither by word nor gesture did she display the slightest interest, and Henry, addressing himself to Sir Percy, scarcely recognised her presence.

"It may be possible," said the Baronet, "that I shall occasionally accompany Lady Blanche in her visits to you; but as you require so many sittings, I may not be able to attend her ladyship every day. I presume that—that—in short, that there will be no impropriety in her coming alone?"

As quick as lightning flashed the telegraphic spark from eye to eye; each read as in a book the other's thoughts, as Henry replied, "Lady Blanche is perfectly safe in coming here, and, as you observe, I shall require a good deal of her ladyship's time, in order to render the likeness as finished as you desire it to be."

"Neither time nor expense are to be considered," rejoined Sir Percy; "my wish is that the portrait should be a masterpiece; it is your own interest to make it so, as in case the picture pleases me, I shall recommend you to my friends."

The artist bowed his thanks, for truth to say, the arrogant air of his would-be patron stung him to the quick, and he could not trust himself to reply in words.

The marked contrast between these two men struck Lady Blanche most forcibly, and their being brought into direct contact deepened if possible her relative feelings towards them. Never before had Henry Mortimer seemed to her so noble, and so beautiful; and in comparison as he rose in her estimation the Baronet sank in her regards. Narrow-minded, unprincipled, a very pigmy in point of intellect, she entertained towards him a sentiment of intense repugnance, and another feeling had birth in her soul, deep shame that such a man should usurp authority over her, should control her actions, and talk of her as if she were his property—his chattel. How she fretted and chafed beneath the curb, how her pure spirit sickened for freedom,

and longed to break from the vile thraldom that kept it in bonds!

What to her were noble birth, exalted rank, and countless wealth, that she should bow down and worship them, refusing the heart's allegiance to the only true nobility that the earth contains? She must, forsooth, deport herself towards the artist with becoming reserve, keeping him at a proper distance, and repelling any attempt at familiarity! Disgusting sophistry, abominable jargon, when will England's daughters awake from the hideous nightmare that benumbs each energy, and refuse at the great world's mandate to fetch and carry like beaten spaniels? When will the enfranchised spirit burst from the cerement that wraps it in death-like slumber, and

the women of England learn the grand eternal love of acting according to the dictates of their own true hearts? How often are the soul's noblest attributes lost and destroyed through feebleness of purpose! how

> "The spirit wastes beneath it,
> Like the ceiba choked with vines!"

During the two first sittings with which Lady Blanche favoured the artist her unwelcome companion managed to remain with her, but on the third morning he feigned some excuse for absenting himself, and with a wildly happy heart she repaired to the studio alone. Oh, the glad moments of delicious joy, the intoxicating sweetness of that brief time! Where were now the "becoming reserve," the "proper

distance," as he clasped her to his breast and kissed her willing lips. No matter that poison lurked in the cup; they would drain the tempting draught, though death itself should ensue.

With an exclamation of surprised delight Blanche recognised her likeness in the young country matron that adorned the painted landscape, and with a thrill of ecstasy her eyes rested on the golden-haired child that nestled against her bosom.

"Ah, Henry," she exclaimed, "why was I not born a gipsy maiden under the shadow of the greenwood tree, afar in the depths of some sylvan forest! would that kind fortune had exchanged me for some brown-eyed bantling, that the blessings I enjoy--

oh, cruel mockery!—had descended on another head. Nay, dearest, let me gaze again and again. May not I also dream of what might have been? Oh God! the awful contrast with the stern reality!"

They stood in silence looking at the picture, as the traveller gazes at the false mirage that cheats his enraptured sight.

"Could my Blanche be happy under similar circumstances?" inquired Henry, pointing to the painting; "could she be satisfied to live alone for me and mine in the heart of the old primeval forest, to abandon all the pomp and glory of the world of fashion, and resign herself to a life of obscurity?"

"Do you taunt me with my present happiness?" she said with a bitter laugh;

"am *I* contented under existing circumstances, that you appear to think it would be a hardship to barter these questionable pleasures? I tell you, Henry, that I would have been willing to share a life of toil, to work like the lowest hireling in my father's house, to wear the humblest clothing and subsist on the poorest fare, could I but have kept my soul pure from the taint of falsehood, the defilement of an acted lie. Think of the life that lies before me—look at it if you can—*I* dare not, for the hideous spectacle would drive me mad. I must rush headlong on the path that fate has shaped for me, driven onwards by a force which I cannot resist—driven onwards, to what doom none may tell. I will be calm now," she continued

after a pause, "and arrange my ruffled plumage; I fear that storm has discomposed the artistic foldings of my robe."

With a sad, wan smile she seated herself in front of the artist, and he, applying himself to his palette, worked on in silence.

The hours passed swiftly, bringing them nearer to that fatal day that was to see the wreck of their happiness.

Drifting onwards on the current of time, they both knew that no cry for help, no heart-rending appeal for mercy would be of any avail. In the full sight of land, with the rushing billows bearing them on, they must go down, the waters of despair closing over their devoted heads.

CHAPTER VII.

SIR PERCY TAKES MARY LENNOX BEHIND THE SCENES.

"She stood, not dressed, but draped in pale antique folds, long and regular like sculpture.

"I had seen acting before, but never anything like this."

THE theatre was filled to overflowing; boxes, and pit, and galleries, all had their occupants, and a more enthusiastic audience seldom assembled to do honour to genius and beauty. An actress of world-wide

celebrity, one of the most gifted artistes who had ever graced the British stage, was to make her appearance, and the excited throng was waiting in breathless expectation. The lower tier of boxes contained some of the very *créme* of London society, but I question if they could enjoy the superb spectacle with as great a zest as the humbler portions of the audience.

The tastes of the upper ten thousand were vitiated with satiety; they had drank of the cup of pleasure to the very dregs, and the flavour now palled on their senses.

Perhaps they had never possessed the same keen perception of excellence, the same appreciation of genius; nature's gifts are lavished with unerring justice; and the rough, unshorn mechanic who cheers so

lustily from the upper gallery may discern a beauty and truth in the glorious performance that appeal in vain to the haughty aristocrat. No titled dame in that vast arena, no jewelled minion of the world of fashion, could boast of the exquisite delight, the rare sense of happiness, enjoyed by Mary Lennox. To her it seemed like a wondrous dream. The lights, the music the splendour of the house and its glittering occupants, the marvellous and ever-changing scenes on the stage, and, above all, the superb delineations of the young actress.

Sir Percy Douglas, who occupied a stage-box in company with his *protégé*, was amused no little at the exuberance of her enjoyment. To him the performance was

stale and insipid in the extreme; what cared he for the music, the lights and the glittering throng?

It was all very well to pass an hour in such a place, but the idea of its affording any gratification would have been absurd; in fact, any display of freshness of feeling or aptitude of enjoyment would have been pronounced low and vulgar; it was sufficient to tolerate the performance, but to relish it was out of the question. The *blasé* man of the world would have been ashamed to recall the time when such exhibitions possessed a charm for him; he would have blushed to remember the wild and fervent delight that filled his boyish heart as he revelled in the wonders of the Christmas pantomime, believing the whole affair to be

the work of magic, and almost refusing to credit the evidence of his own senses. In such matters Mary was still a child; her narrow world had admitted of no variety, no amusement; her recreations had been limited to a quiet country saunter on a Sabbath afternoon, or occasionally listening to the performances of a set of sable harmonists, or sundry organ-men at street corners. It was not alone the unaccustomed gaiety of the scene, the superb mounting of the piece represented, that interested the unsophisticated country girl; she became so much absorbed in the events of the drama, so engrossed by the matchless performance of the heroine, so bewitched by the surpassing excellence of the display, that every sense was kept in thraldom. Soon

all was forgotten excepting the glorious creature on the brilliant stage.

Oh, how the heart of Mary Lennox bounded towards her with a feeling of love and gratitude, of almost worship ; how she seemed to share in the wild enthusiasm that greeted her, rendering a willing homage to one so richly dowered.

There was no *acting* on the stage that night, no mimicry of the soul's fierce passions. Love, resentment, indignation, despair, they were all felt and represented. There was no trained cadence in the wild cry for mercy, no studied effort in the fell curse that hissed from those white lips, whiter than the statue-like robes that enfolded her. Inspiration was the power that controlled each action, governed

each movement, prompted every utterance.

The denunciations that burst forth, shaped into speech by the soul's anguish, roused like a trumpet-call a thousand answering hearts; a storm of applause seemed to rend the very walls, as the pale, shadowy figure glided from the foot-lights.

An interval of some minutes elapsed, and Mary Lennox sought to divert her thoughts by taking a survey of the excited audience. In the centre of the house, nearly opposite to the stage, a group of gentlemen and ladies arrested her attention; watching them for a brief time, she became so much interested in the appearance of one of the ladies, that she pointed

her out to Sir Percy, eagerly asking him her name and rank.

"Oh! look, Percy! I mean that pale girl near the centre of the box with the coronet of blush-roses on her forehead; I cannot withdraw my eyes from her face."

"That," answered her companion, "is the Lady Alice Mowbray, and the gentleman sitting next to her is Captain De Vere. They are to be married shortly, and are both as happy as love can make them."

"I am sure you have mistaken me," she hastily interrupted; "I do not mean the dark-eyed beauty who is beside the gentleman in uniform, I mean—look now, she is glancing this way—see, she is now examining the bouquet in her hand."

"You mean Lady Blanche Howard," he replied carelessly, "daughter of the Earl of St. Clyde, and one of the present reigning London beauties."

"It is not her beauty that attracts me," said Mary, "it is something far more than beauty, something that I can neither define nor express; a sad, despairing look that it breaks my heart to witness, a yearning appeal for pity, a wild eerie gaze, such a gaze as some caged creature might wear. Oh! Percy, she must be very unhappy."

"You are mistaken, Mary," was the reply; "she is, on the contrary, very happy and very much to be envied. But see, love, the curtain is rising, and the drama about to recommence."

The remainder of the performance had a

peculiar interest for the observant girl. She had not only to watch the movements on the stage, but to note the effect of each word, each gesture on the Lady Blanche. Her countenance was a mirror, shadowing back every feeling portrayed by the actress. The whispered appeal for compassion, the stern remonstrance against oppression, the low, far-off mutterings of the storm of vengeance, gathering strength to burst on the tyrant's head; the dread warning, the terrible imprecation, the fiery outpouring of a maddened spirit, every emotion was reflected on the mobile face.

Oh! who that was present on that night can ever forget the marvellous display! who can forget the tone, the look, the gesture,

the overwhelming might of the artiste's power! The awful outburst of her wrath, the fearful explosion of the soul's tempest. No wonder that the audience rose *en masse* to do her homage as the magnificent creature reappeared behind the footlights, to receive their plaudits amid a very torrent of flowers that was showered at her feet. Mary Lennox noted her well, noted, too, the pallid face of Lady Blanche as she leaned back in her box in the centre of the tier.

For Sir Percy, the real amusement of the evening had yet to commence, and as Mary seemed so fond of novelty and excitement, he was determined to gratify her by initiating her into some of the mysteries of the green-room. From the nearly

deserted theatre they bent their steps, but instead of emerging from the principal entrance, they descended the steep staircase leading to the stage, and from thence behind the scenes. Even to an accustomed eye the spectacle is strange and fraught with interest. The shifting scenes that looked so dingy in the dim light had seemed far-stretching landscapes of magnificent colouring. Here and there were groups of half-dressed dancing-girls, jaded and worn out, poor things, but still displaying a flippancy of manner, strangely at variance with their languid aspect.

Mary glanced shyly at these airy nymphs, unwilling to attract their notice, for their confident bearing half frightened her,

making her cling more closely to her protector's arm.

One of the stage-directors accompanied them, pointing out the workings of the machinery, and calling Mary's attention to the numerous articles required in the representation of the drama.

The stupendous cliffs that looked so imposing from the boxes were, after all, but very fragile constructions, the old Druidical forest with its growth of many centuries, gnarled oaks and giant beeches with wild flowers clustering round the ponderous roots, was but a flimsy affair, though the woodland elves danced merrily amongst the pasteboard boughs, and fell into mimic trances amid the gaudily-painted flowers. A carpet of green baize did duty

for the mossy sward whereon Titania led the midnight revels, while a tarnished metal moon lent its doubtful light to the scene.

The superb cascade that gleamed in the distance had a very suspicious resemblance to a sheet of tin-foil.

It was with a feeling akin to disappointment that Mary saw the spell dissolved; the dream of enchantment was gone, never to be recalled. The delusion had been so agreeable, she would fain have believed in it still, but for her the shadowy forest had lost its charm, the far-off waterfall was but a vulgar deception. She soon grew tired of the ridiculous display, and was turning to express to Sir Percy her weariness of the whole affair, when their conductor,

hastily withdrawing a curtain, ushered them into a small, elegantly-furnished apartment. Here, at least, all was real, and meant what it represented. The pile of flowers that was heaped on the centre table was real, so was the lady who rested on the luxuriant couch.

Slightly rising from her recumbent attitude she bowed to the visitors; but not until she had uttered a few words of welcome did Mary Lennox recognise in the fair delicate-looking girl, the glorious actress who had so entranced her a short time since. Her maid was putting aside the attire worn on the stage, and replacing her jewels in the casket, whilst the wearied actress enjoyed a brief repose after her superhuman exertions. In sweet soft

accents she thanked Sir Percy for his warm congratulations, and with a smile of gratitude returned the pressure of Mary's hand. The fire of inspiration had died out, the lightning had left the cloud, the fair artiste was but a very lovely and winning woman, nothing more. She perceived the look of surprise in Mary's face, and at once recognising the cause, said:

"I suppose you expected to see me playing off my theatrical airs even behind the scenes? but it is a relief to me to be allowed to assume my own individuality."

"That would be too severe a test of your powers," Sir Percy rejoined; "I fear my friend and I are trespassing on your kindness, a bad return for your goodness in

according us this interview after the fatigues of the evening."

Taking leave of the accomplished actress, the Baronet and his companion left the dressing-room; and thus ended Mary's first experience of theatrical life.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WEDDING DAY.

"Call'st thou that marriage which but joins
Two hands with iron bonds?
No, 'tis the spirit that alone can wed."

BRIGHTLY shone the sun on this auspicious morning, and all the world knew, that is, all the London world, that Sir Percy Douglas, Baronet, was about to lead to the hymeneal altar the beautiful and accomplished Lady Blanche Howard, only daughter of the Right Honourable the Earl of St. Clyde.

With a dull sense of mental suffering, an undefined presentiment of coming ill, the destined bride awoke from her unrefreshing slumbers.

Doubtless her feelings were analogous to those of a criminal on the morning of execution. But there was no time to pursue the comparison, if indeed the idea occurred to her at all, for the victim must be decked, ready for the sacrifice.

Perhaps she adopted the wisest course, when she resolved for the time being to banish every thought linked to the past, or connected with the future. She must brace her energies to meet the present, calling every feeling into abeyance. Merrily clashed the bells from tower and

steeple, filling the soft summer air with tones of mocking gladness.

> "The funeral bell that in *her* heart is tolling,
> Sounds over all!"

The stately mansion of Lord St. Clyde was again decked out in holiday array. Chaplets, and wreaths, and triumphal arches were suspended from dome and pillar. Had a hatchment embellished the broad front of the imposing edifice it would have been more in keeping, the gloomy record of departed happiness—of buried hopes.

Flowers clustered round the feet of Lady Blanche as she descended the steps leading from the portico. Flowers were crushed beneath her steps as she headed the white procession leading to the altar;

would that they had had the power to keep aloof the evil destiny that awaited her, like the "golden barricade" of May-flowers that are supposed to keep the fairy elves at bay!

The solemn service commenced, the awful ceremonial that was to bind her to a lifelong captivity; like the words of doom sounded the dread ritual in her ears, and the low, scarcely articulated responses fell from her faltering lips. The golden sun-light streamed through the painted window, illumining with its resplendent dyes the kneeling figure at the altar, and decking it with rainbow hues. A halo of splendour seemed to rest on the bowed head, whilst the diamond-dewed flowers flashed back the radiance. Those who

noted the lustre of the slanting sunbeam augured well for the fair young head that appeared crowned with a ray from Heaven; but, alas! no sunshine dwelt within the heart that beat beneath the bridal robe.

Amid the congratulations of her friends, and the deafening acclamations of the assembled crowd, the Lady Blanche Douglas re-entered the carriage that waited to convey the "happy pair" to the Earl's mansion; where, as the newspapers afterwards recorded, a sumptuous *déjeûner* was served to the numerous and distinguished guests! The magnificent presents that had been lavished on the bride were all displayed; "the slave of the ring" might in truth boast of her priceless treasures, the rare set of

sapphires almost vying in value with the costly parure of diamonds presented by the bridegroom. Could the destruction of those jewels but have served to purchase her ransom, how proudly would she have trodden the glittering gems underfoot, scattering their shattered splendour in the dust. She regarded them with feelings of aversion, for were they not part of the purchase-money by which she had been sold into slavery ?

Fortunately for Blanche, the interesting occasion admitted of the utmost reserve of manner; it was not only proper, but decorous in the bride to assume a blushing timidity of bearing, a downcast hesitating air, a bashful modesty of demeanour !

Cold and white as marble, shrouded in

the snowy folds of her veil, she took her place at the superbly-decked board opposite to a huge piece of confectionary ycleped the wedding-cake, which looked like an overturned avalanche.

Blanche could scarcely restrain a smile of bitterness as she noted the absurd devices that ornamented the sugar masonry. Winged Cupids, white doves, and hearts linked together. With a sense of the utmost depression she listened to the vapid speech in which her husband returned thanks for the honour that had been done them in pledging their health.

The commonplace expressions, trite phrases, and wretched attempts at wit stung her to the quick; alas! she must school her heart to witness such displays.

The weary banquet at length drew to a close, and the newly-married pair left town in a magnificent chariot for one of the Earl's seats in a Midland county.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BRIDAL CHAMBER.

"Put out the light."

In the northern regions of perpetual snow, where winter reigns supreme for the greater part of the year, a summer of several months' duration succeeds to cheer the desolate inhabitants; the sun setting at midnight to rise again with renewed brilliancy. During that welcome time, no dim twilight nor gathering darkness over-

spreads the land, but eternal day smiles on the sterile plains.

Could the wedding-day of Lady Blanche Douglas have been equally prolonged, could the hours have passed as slowly as the Lapland summer, her heart would not have sank with such utter dismay.

The shades of evening fell around, not even the beams of an unclouded moon could dispel the gathering gloom ; the dark night was coming on, that dreaded night of misery and shame.

In vain Sir Percy strove to cheer the spirits of his bride, his very caresses and endearments only increased her depression ; and yet she must endure them, nay, in duty bound, she should have returned them. The *tête-à-tête* dinner passed almost

in silence ; they were strange to each other, and, having no ideas in common, could only converse on the most hackneyed subjects. An icy barrier seemed to separate them, and not even Sir Percy's effrontery could dissipate the feeling of shyness and reserve. Honeyed words and loving embraces are thrice welcome when they meet with a response, but as the sweetest music sounds on the reluctant ear like jarring discord, so does the forbidden caress repel where it seeks to allure. And yet in the heart of Lady Blanche existed that longing for sympathy, that yearning for love felt by every true woman ; the desire to live alone, solitary and uncared for, was not in her impassioned nature. Now that the pageant of the day was over, the stately ceremonial

ended, she was free to set at liberty her fugitive thoughts, like captive birds released from imprisonment.

For a brief time she must give herself up to the remembrance of the past, in imagination revelling in those forbidden scenes; overtasked nature cannot endure continual tension. The tortured body tossing on the bed of pain hopes to obtain some temporary alleviation from suffering, so will the agonised mind seek relief by change of thought. In the gloomy retrospect that passed before her mental vision she strove to gain a brief forgetfulness of the present, but the welcome flavour of the forbidden nectar only served to increase the nausea of the bitter cup from which she must quaff the hateful draught. Sir Percy sought to

engage his wife in conversation, selecting the subjects most interesting to himself—his horses, his dogs, the coming season for grouse shooting; he even descanted on the beauty of the Highland scenery surrounding his shooting-lodge, the purple moors, and far-stretching range of mountains.

"You will enjoy your visit to Scotland during the coming autumn," he remarked; "for doubtless by that time, dearest Blanche, you will be weary of the balls and *fêtes* to be given in your honour. My sweet wife will be doubly dear to me amid the solitude of the heathery hills."

It was an unfortunate subject he had chosen, for the thoughts of Lady Blanche were far away, not amongst the glens and breezy hills of Scotland, but in the heart of

London, in that dim studio brightened by *his* presence, illumined by *his* genius. Those winged thoughts had taken a wide range, and it was no easy matter to recall the truants home. Sir Percy's elaborate description of the golden-purple moor, the sounding waterfall, the sunny lake nestling amid the green hills, fell upon a most listless ear; for another vision had arisen to meet her gaze—the humble homestead in the cleared forest; she might have indeed exclaimed:

"Look upon this picture, and on this."

The Baronet, strong in the possession of overweening self-love, attributed the listless manner of Lady Blanche to fatigue and excitement. As to any feeling of indif-

ference towards himself, the idea would have seemed preposterous; had it even occurred to him, he would have dismissed it as an impossibility. Still, Sir Percy would have been better satisfied had his wife evinced a greater degree of interest in his favourite subjects, and listened with more appearance of warmth to an account of his pursuits; but he consoled himself with the thought that in time he would be able to mould her in accordance with his wishes. Why should he not break in his wife as well as his horses?

The English summer's day, not the Lapland day, had drawn to a close, and the hapless bride retired to her nuptial chamber. I suppose I should pause here, that decorum and propriety forbid intrusion

within the sacred precincts, the temple dedicated to connubial joys. The trembling bride may weep on the fatal threshold; who feels for her, or sympathises with her impulse of fear and dread? The relatives and friends who accompanied her to the altar, and presided at the marriage feast, had done their part and fulfilled each duty; for them the day finished with revelry and rejoicing. Amid their dancing and ill-timed mirth did no one cast a thought on the victim? So might they have made merry round the funeral pyre of the Indian widow, heedless of her misery and anguish. No rude hand should interpose to withdraw the curtain and unmask the scene; decency forbids, and modesty hangs her head at the bare suggestion.

The fairy creatures who graced the Countess of St. Clyde's ball on that eventful night, of course never once thought of the newly-wedded pair. Panting in the willingly-received caresses of their partners, did they not cling to the protecting arm with a closer embrace as a vision of the happy pair arose on their view? For decency and modesty we have a real regard, but truth and candour must be respected also.

Lady Blanche lingered before the magnificent dressing-table, and a face white and fixed as death looked out at her from the reflecting mirror. Her maid had been dismissed, and now, for the first time, she was alone with her great misery.. She saw two lustreless eyes, and hands clasped in agony,

and the awful fear arose in her mind that she was going mad—mad in the marriage chamber, beside the nuptial bed. Ay; within that sacred enclosure many a weary spirit has felt the approach of that terrible shadow, the fell spectre that loomed on their dazed senses; many a wild cry has burst unheard from fevered lips. Let the fearless hand rend the shrouding curtain that screens such horrors from view, let the perpetrators of the accursed crime be brought face to face with their victims, doomed by their base machinations, sold into slavery by them; let them not dare to shield themselves under a pretended sentiment of decency and propriety. Is it decent to commit a pure-minded, high-souled woman to the debauched embrace of

a human satyr? is it proper that she should pander to his lusts, and satisfy his brutal craving? Surely it is time that the consummation of this system of iniquity should be brought to light, that the mask should be flung aside, and the naked truth disclosed. Were the victims of loveless and forced marriages to narrate the experience of their individual feelings, a more ghastly and revolting chronicle the world would not contain.

The sufferer stretched on the torturing rack could boast of more pleasurable sensations than the Lady Blanche as she pillowed her head on the soft down. Listening for the dreaded footsteps, her heart beat wild and fast; with breathless fear, with an intolerable sense of utter helplessness, she

heard her husband approach, and knew that before many minutes should elapse, he would enfold her in his clasp, and gloat over her untasted charms.

Was this the holy marriage instituted of old, the prompting of impassioned love, the enjoyment of wedded bliss?

Put out the light, let darkness fall on the prostituted couch and the hateful orgies he perpetrated amid the blackness of midnight.

CHAPTER X.

THE COTTAGE NEAR LONDON.

"She sits to-night,
When all the little town is lost in dream,
Thinking of me."

SLOWLY and wearily the time rolled on, days and weeks passed away, and the golden summer-time was beginning to give place to autumn; still no tidings of Sir Percy Douglas reached the cottage near London. Already the dark-green creepers that interlaced the latticed porch were beginning to wear a golden tinge, and the

summer flowers drooped heavily on their stems. Oh, how mournfully those dreary days passed, how the longing heart pined and sickened with hope deferred; still she thought the morrow will surely bring him back. Every night when she laid her poor aching head on the desolate pillow, the half-uttered prayer escaped her lips that she might see him again; for, despite his worthlessness, Mary Lennox dearly loved her seducer, regarding him as a benefactor, and indeed as her only friend. Of a nature intensely grateful, her heart clung to him with feelings of deep thankfulness, and to minister to his happiness was the all-absorbing wish of her life. To her pure unselfish disposition the very luxuries she possessed were valueless except shared by

him. In hourly expectation of his return, she busied herself incessantly with those little preparations she fancied most likely to please him. The shrubberies and walks were kept in admirable order; in the gardens not a withered or unsightly plant was to be seen. Every day fresh flowers were gathered for the boudoir, and by her own hands the furniture was arranged in accordance with his tastes. Not for her own gratification was so much time lavished on her toilet, and when she began to note the sunken cheek and languid eye, her heart misgave her lest he should regard with displeasure the unwelcome change. Sometimes she strove to read the books that Sir Percy had procured for her amusement or instruction; but they failed to

awaken her interest; the slightest unwonted sound, the barking of a dog, or the distant roll of carriage wheels, would bring the quick blood to her cheek, whilst the despised volume was hastily laid aside, that she might listen with throbbing pulse and wildly-beating heart for the coming footsteps. She would saunter listlessly through the gardens and picturesque grounds, striving to conceal the grief that was sapping her life, and cheating herself into the belief that another day would witness his return.

The feelings that tortured her were of such a varied nature, that it was impossible for her to combat with them all. Her chief anxiety was for his safety, as no letter had reached her for weeks, and then

only a few lines containing a clumsy excuse for his absence. How could she be certain that he was not languishing on a sick-bed alone and untended, or perhaps beset by unheard-of dangers, dragged into underground dens, and there barbarously murdered? Mary's experience in novel literature was confined to the melodramatic productions stealthily devoured in her childhood, and her highly-coloured imagination too readily believed that her lover had met with a fate similar to that of her most admired heroes. Death by poison, or suffocation by the fumes of charcoal, would have been very commonplace occurrences; something far more dreadful, she was certain, must have befallen him.

If a mermaid had dragged him under

the waves to live in coral palaces, it would not have surprised her very much; she had read of such things, and in her blind idolatry of her benefactor, she could readily have believed in the fact of his having won the affections of a sea nymph. These fears were sad enough—sad enough to cause her to weep hysterically, to clasp her hands in wild terror, and breathe a frantic aspiration for his deliverance. But after a time a far more terrible doubt arose in her mind; a doubt to be reflected upon with bated breath, and white horror-stricken face. At first she strove to battle with it, to even laugh at what she consoled herself by pronouncing superstitious fears, absurd fancies, and looking them steadily in the face as a frightened child might gaze at a ghostly

shadow, strove to dissipate the illusion. She would trample it down as she would a noisome weed; why should that terrible phantom darken her path, that fell spectre haunt her with its weird and ghastly presence? She would sit for hours conning over each record of his love, rehearsing every endearing scene; not one kiss, not one impassioned glance was forgotten. In imagination she told them all over, as a nun might tell her rosary, lingering on every bead.

On such a day he had treated her with such caressing fondness, on another day he had assured her of his undying love, and a few hours before he left her, he had placed on her finger the little ring with its turquoise "Forget-me-not!" Was it

reasonable, was it just to impute fickleness to him? So she argued, and of course Sir Percy had the benefit of the doubt, whilst a torrent of tears evinced her contrition for having wronged him even in thought.

Sometimes she thought of the old time in London, the toilsome hours she had passed in the close workroom; and in contrasting her former life with the present, she wondered at her abject misery. Had she not a luxurious home, servants to wait upon her, sumptuous fare, and magnificent attire? had she not books, and flowers, and pictures? had she not—ah, but the dark shadow would return again and again, the maddening thought of his desertion almost blotting out the light of reason. She sought to alleviate her sorrow by

striving to keep in remembrance the petty trials and privations from which she had suffered so deeply, cheating herself into the belief that she was a most enviable being, and wondering what the poor denizens of the workroom would not give to exchange situations with her. She seemed to have a morbid gratification in dwelling on such subjects, harrowing her soul with a retrospect of the privations from which she had escaped.

A little song that she used to sing in those days of penury was now an especial favourite, and in the calm twilight, with the evening star shining overhead in the darkening sky, Mary's sweet voice might be heard amid the embowering trees.

"The midnight hour had struck—
With a low, heart-rending cry,
She turned to her task and thought
How the time was wearing by.

"The slave in the dismal swamp,
That faints 'neath the driver's goad,
Hath as much of the joys of freedom
As the slave in that dank abode.

"The rain from the broken roof
Drops with a dull cold plash;
It falls on the bowed-down head
Like the weight of the driver's lash.

* * * * * *

"The bowed-down head droops lower,
Hark to that wailing cry;
The white slave thanks the Christian's GOD
That she is free to die!"

If poor Mary imagined that her spirits were enlivened by the singing of these mournful strains, she was much deceived; there was generally a heavy rain of tears at the conclusion of the plaintive melody,

indeed the song was for the most part wailed forth rather than sung; it seemed like the outpouring of a heart charged to overflowing. Poor lonely girl, she had no companion in her solitude; there was no shoulder on which she could rest her wearied head and sob herself to sleep.

Sir Percy had kept her so much in the dark regarding his movements and mode of life, she had no means of ascertaining anything of his present fate; she was even ignorant of the hotel where he stopped, and to commence a search for him in London would have been useless. It occurred to her once or twice that she should put an advertisement in the *Times*, and puzzled herself over the contents of the second column. Could she not implore

of "Percy to return to his disconsolate Mary, and all would be forgiven." She fancied if that touching appeal could but meet his eye he would be in her arms before many hours. But a difficulty existed that Mary did not at first recognise: no newspapers ever reached her in her country retreat; by Sir Percy's orders they had been carefully excluded. She knew not where to send the advertisement, nor, in case the Baronet replied to her through the *Times*, was it likely ever to meet her eye.

She must wait yet a little longer; in truth she had no alternative; what else remained for her but to wait patiently or impatiently as the case might be? Fresh flowers were again placed in the boudoir,

and the lace curtains looped back in more picturesque folds, and Mary herself attired in his favourite dress.

She waited dinner until eight o'clock, but once more the meal was eaten in solitary silence; an evening repast was then laid out in the dining-room, consisting of coffee and confectionery, with a basket of tempting-looking fruit garnished with leaves and flowers. How she longed to select the ripest berries for his lips, and to hear him praise the dainty arrangement of the table. These preparations appeared to afford her a painful pleasure, perhaps she thought they hastened his coming, or they beguiled her into the belief that he would certainly soon return. She began at last to feel ashamed of these evidences of

longing anxiety, for the domestics regarded her with undisguised looks of astonishment as they removed the nearly untasted viands, her ignorance of their master's movements seemed unaccountable.

Another week of anguish passed away, a night of intolerable suffering gave place to morning, and Mary, too listless and unhappy to leave her couch, reclined in a state of half stupor listening to the plaintive call of a blackbird beneath her window. At any other time she would have enjoyed the mellow whistle, but now it was too much for her over-tasked spirit; the unstrung nerves were alive to every sound. She wept feebly and hopelessly, and if any unexpressed wish filled her thoughts, it was

that she might soon die; death was all that was left for her.

A low knock at her chamber door aroused her from this lethargic state, and she nearly sprung from her bed when she perceived a letter in her maid's hand. In a moment the missive was torn open, and an exclamation of hysteric delight burst from her lips as she announced the joyful intelligence that Sir Percy would arrive that evening; there was no sadness now in the blackbird's song.

"Never did tropic bird with wings of azure sheen
Carol so proud a lay!"

The sunshine was brighter than ever, the air warmer and purer, and no summer day could match with that soft autumn morning. It was no toil now to fill the snowy

vases with flame-coloured geraniums and tall feathery ferns, to see that the gardens were denuded of withered flowers, and the plants in the conservatory arranged with dexterous care, in the joy of her heart she would have strewn the very drive leading to the house with fresh roses.

How the happy day glided to a close, the mellow sunset giving place to a clear twilight. Again was the simple repast of coffee and fruit spread for the loved guest. If ever Mary Lennox merited the term of exquisitely beautiful, it was on that day; her eyes sparkled like gems, and a scarlet spot seemed not only to glow, but to burn on her somewhat wasted cheek. With an eerie cry, such a cry as some wild animal might utter if its young were restored to

it, she flew to meet the approaching carriage. In a moment she was in his arms, clasped in his embrace, and receiving the long-desired kiss of rapture. Clinging to each other they entered the latticed porch, and were soon seated at the frugal meal in the dining-room. In the ecstasy of seeing him again Mary forgot to make inquiries of Sir Percy regarding his continued absence, and unaccountable silence; he was with her now, and that was sufficient with her, perhaps to remain for ever. At the conclusion of the repast the Baronet looked at her long and earnestly, and for the first time a pang of remorse was experienced. Perhaps a stronger feeling existed, for Mary's dazzling loveliness and gentle grace had never impressed

him more deeply. Wicked and worthless as he assuredly was, he could not think unconcernedly of the two women whom he had wronged; it would be hard to decide as to which was more deserving of pity. Mary's joyous manner stung him keenly, making his self-imposed task so much more difficult; she was in no mood for the revelation he was about to disclose. Had she met him with reproaches, or upbraided him with his heartless neglect, it would have been easy to have replied in defiant tones, revealing the tale of his iniquity; but with that pure childlike face, so full of love and confidence, lifted to his own, whilst the oft-repeated kiss greeted his lip, he shrank from the hated confession.

"If you are not weary, Percy," exclaimed

Mary, enfolding him in her arms, "we might take a stroll by the starlight, and to-morrow, darling, you must accompany me to the gardens and admire the improvements suggested by my taste. You remember the stream at the foot of the lawn; it has been trained to form a kind of tiny cascade; you could almost hear its rippling music from the porch."

Hand in hand they paced the shrubbery walks, Sir Percy feeling almost thankful for the gloom that hid his face from her view. He dared not in the broad light of day, nor in the lamp's full glare, unfold the awful tale of his wicked perfidy, better that she should hear it beneath a darkening sky, only illumined by the eternal stars.

"Mary," he uttered with faltering tone, "if one you loved dearly was guilty of a crime, if he had been tempted to do a deed of wrong from which his soul recoils, if he had been lured from the path of honour and integrity, and had fallen very low, what sentence would you pronounce on him?"

"Oh, Percy," she replied, "is it of yourself you speak? I do not understand such strange language; who has been lured from the path of honour, and tempted to do a deed of wrong?"

"I have," was the brief rejoinder.

"*You!*" she exclaimed with startled haste; "ah no, Percy, that is impossible; but," she added, correcting herself, "if it be truly so, if you have indeed done a wrong,

I can but love you all the dearer; though others may upbraid and shun you, never from my lips shall one reproachful word be uttered. Oh, Percy, Percy, you little know me if you think my love cannot bear the test of shame and guilt; take me to your arms, my own beloved, no matter how guilty you may be."

"If you but knew all," he faltered, "you would hate and spurn me as I deserve. Oh, Mary, I never knew until now how dear you are to me."

"*I* spurn you!" she said, for his pitiful accents sank deep in her heart; "so long as you are true to me, it matters little what crimes you have committed. You know, dearest, we can live here a life of perfect seclusion; in this quiet place you

can evade the law, if indeed it has power to punish you."

"Not the law of God," he answered; "and yet how many have sinned as I have done, without falling in the world's estimation! I have only done as hundreds of my class are doing every day; and I suppose, according to the usages of society, there was no other course left open for me."

"Why, after all there seems nothing to repent of," said Mary. "Percy, you have been alarming me most needlessly."

"Would you wish to know the nature of my crime, Mary? Shall I utter the hideous revelation in your ear, or do you prefer to remain in ignorance?"

"Anything is better than uncertainty," she faintly uttered.

"Be it so then," he rejoined; "and remember, Mary, when your heart rises in accusation against me, that I also have been the dupe, perhaps the too willing dupe, of a system of direst iniquity; that for me, from my earliest years, justice has been perverted, and truth distorted. I need not stop to inquire if my long absence surprised and pained you; of this I am very certain, and that day after day you expected my return, until your heart grew sick with disappointment. You might have guessed, Mary, that it was some unwonted occurrence that kept me so long from your side, that it was an affair of the utmost importance. You may remember, on the evening you accompanied me to the theatre, you called my attention

to a lady who sat in a box in the centre of the tier." The arm that clung to him was trembling pitifully, and the heart that leaned against his own beat loud and fast. "The Lady Blanche Howard—Mary, that lady is my wife!"

There was no answer as the helpless figure slid from his grasp and fell on the sward; no uttered remonstrance against the cruel blow. Carrying her to a seat under the trees, he strove to recall her to life and motion, but for a considerable time without effect. As she slowly regained consciousness, low moans broke from her lips, like the utterances of a person in pain; neither clinging to nor repelling him, she lay prone in his arms, bereft of speech and animation. Sir Percy was certainly in no

enviable position, and how to extricate himself from the perplexing dilemma was beyond his skill to ascertain. With that senseless figure clasped in his arms beneath the darkened sky, he thought of his wedded wife, the wife he had vowed to love and cherish; she also in her London mansion awaited his coming, not with any pleasurable feelings it must be confessed.

Slowly the awful truth broke on the mind of Mary Lennox, the dread reality revealed itself to her awakening perceptions; but stunned by the unexpected blow, she had no power to reason or act.

"That lady is my wife;" the words fell slowly from her lips, breaking the solemn stillness. They were succeeded by a low sound of weeping; there was no turbulence,

no vengeful fury in poor Mary's sorrow. She could not storm and rage, and shower down blighting curses on her seducer's head. She could not thunder forth terrible anathemas, and with the air of an inspired prophetess foretell the dire doom that awaited him.

Slowly uncoiling herself from his embrace, she arose to return to the cottage. She knew that something must be done, some great change take place; she could not continue to live there as she had done, still her mind must get time to recover before any plan for the future could be resolved on. At present she could only dwell on her great sorrow, her fearful anguish; and strange to say, with that thought arose a feeling of compassion for

Lady Blanche, for had not she been also deceived? in her confused state of mind she could hardly decide which had been the more deeply wronged.

If Sir Percy Douglas dreaded a scene his fears were utterly groundless. Not a word of resentment escaped her lips; she asked no questions, sought for no information; it was enough for her that her doom had been spoken, but how it had been brought about she cared not to inquire.

She passed before him into the darkened porch, crushed and broken-hearted, from a paradise of joy into lifelong misery.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LADY BLANCHE'S BOUDOIR.

"Let eyes not see their own delight."

THE Earl and Countess of St. Clyde were so perfectly satisfied that they had done their duty towards their daughter, no disturbing fears or doubts arose to obscure the serenity of their lives. No one could accuse them of neglect or indifference towards their only child; they had secured her a blissful lot, and of course it was only

reasonable to expect that she would be happy.

At first the Countess perceived Lady Blanche's indifference towards her husband with a feeling of concern, but she speedily consoled herself with the sage remark so commonly expressed by mercenary parents, "She will grow to like him;" it never occurred to her ladyship that Blanche might grow to abhor him, that she might live to curse the day that saw their schemes crowned with success. If there be indifference before marriage, be sure that it will end in aversion; if there be dislike, it will as certainly turn to hatred.

Woe to the woman who brings no dowry of love to the nuptial state, who deceives herself with the idea that her husband's

kindness will engender gratitude, and that that feeling will, in the end, produce affection. Let him clothe her in the richest stuffs of India cloth of gold and silver, let him deck her with the rarest gems, and lavish on his chosen bride the richest gifts his generosity can suggest, they will utterly fail to kindle in her breast one spark of passion. She may train her tongue to speak his welcome, to deceive him with feigned professions of affection, but all the wealth of the world would fail to call forth one thrill of ecstacy as she listens to the approaching footsteps.

Lady Blanche Douglas so far from becoming more enamoured of her lord and master, grew to regard him with feelings of even deeper aversion. At a distance she

might have tolerated his coarse mind and shallow intellect, but brought into daily and hourly contact, his presence became almost unendurable, She would wander for hours through her magnificent dwelling, desolate and lonely, with the awful secret of her illicit love locked in her heart. All that wealth could procure was her's, every sense had been gratified to satiety, riches sufficient to purchase a prince's ransom had been lavished to minister to her enjoyment, and yet having every thing she had nothing so long as happiness kept aloof. A craving for something unattainable, seemed to have taken possession of her, a longing not to be appeased. She, who knew nothing of hunger and thirst, was devoured by a ravenous yearning that food and drink were

ineffectual to banish. By incessant gaiety she sought zealously to overpower and divert this morbid feeling. Night after night Sir Percy and his fair wife were to be met with in the fashionable world, balls and *fêtes*, and theatres were duly honoured by their presence, but though the outward show of contentment seemed real, the heart was famished for lack of sustenance. Oh, that fearful hunger and thirst with which no other want can compare! though starvation prey on the vitals, and the fevered lip blacken with thirst, such sufferings are as nothing estimated with the anguished longing for the presence of the loved one.

Lady Blanche would have bartered the rarest jewels in her casket for one hour's communion with Henry Mortimer, one kiss

from his lips. She deceived herself into the belief that could she procure an interview with her former lover it would enable her to endure her present misery and strengthen her for future trials.

So strong had this feeling become she ceased to combat with it; it was needless trying to struggle with an impulse too fierce to be controlled.

Of a nature intensely warm, to which love was an absolute need, a disposition amorous as that of an eastern houri, the hot blood coursed through her veins till the fiery longing nearly approached to madness. It is all very well to talk of wrestling with the overwhelming impulse that enslaves the feelings, to curb the fierce excitement, and restrain the craving appetite.

It is, no doubt, a very meritorious act to trample on the passions and share the lawful enjoyment within reach, but how few are there in this world of our's capable of such self-sacrifice? Lady Blanche was not, she knew that her ardent cravings could only be appeased by gratifaction.

It may be asked why she did not state her case to some virtuous friend, some wise censor, cold as an iceberg, and rivalling a snow-drift in purity? he would have lectured her on the wickedness of harbouring carnal desires, and counselled her against yielding to her lustful propensities. He might, with as much reason, have reprimanded the famine victim for his iniquity in being hungry, and cautioned him against the sin of striving to appease the craving for food!

Hour after hour Lady Blanche would pace through those superb saloons, restless and impatient, it could not be said like the "old man in search of something," for she knew that nothing short of a miracle could have transported the artist from his humble studio to her splendid apartments; she only wandered about because she found it impossible to remain still, to sit down with that savage want gnawing at her heart. Knowing that her husband would be absent for some days, she determined to summon her maid to her presence, and with careless air and composed bearing, commission her to carry some trifling message to Henry Mortimer, the young artist who had painted the portraits in the Earl's picture gallery; she would frame some plausible excuse, she

wanted to have a landscape copied, or a miniature of herself taken to surprise Sir Percy. Seldom had the Lady Blanche stooped to practise deception, but she knew that they who had consigned her to such a miserable fate, were alone answerable for her transgressions.

An awkward apology was proffered to the abigail for despatching her on such a mission, in place of one of the men-servants, but it was readily accepted, the woman seeming well pleased to be entrusted with her mistress' commands.

Through the lofty suites of rooms she paced incessantly, to and fro between the huge mirrors that reflected back her startled face. What if Sir Percy returned unexpectedly? What if the maid, suspecting

her purpose, should betray her. What if —she had no time to pursue the questions, for a footstep was at the door, and in a moment the maid entered alone.

With a disappointed air she turned to confront her, but was satisfied with the assurance that the artist would obey her commands in a short time, but that just at present he was engaged with a lady whose likeness he was taking. She was almost relieved at the delay, for her agitation had been so extreme some traces of it still remained on her countenance, and she had need to recall her scattered senses.

Gradually her mind became composed, and she was half angry with herself for entertaining such absurd fears; even supposing Sir Percy should return, what was there to

arouse suspicion, the painter, in his eyes, was but a tradesman, and he would as soon have thought of being jealous of his valet, and as to the maid, she would think no more of the occurrence than if one of Storr and Mortimer's young men had called to shew "my lady a new design in diamonds."

The day had nearly drawn to a close when the anxiously-expected visitor was announced. Lady Blanche received him in her boudoir. As they had not met since the marriage, there was an air of embarrassment on both sides, a feeling of restraint, not that their love was less fervent, but each was doubtful of the other. Lady Blanche, with the natural delicacy of a woman, hesitated to make the first advance,

and Henry was too proud to evince feelings that might meet with a scornful repulse, he thought it better that the *artist* should speak; and he judged rightly.

"I was sorry that I could not at once obey your Ladyship's commands," he said, "but I was particularly engaged when your maid called."

She gazed at him with the old appealing look pleading for compassion and pity, and the expression of sorrow that had, if possible, increased her loveliness, filled his heart with sadness. It was the loving face that had looked at him from the flower-wreathed porch, the face that had bent above the golden-haired child, it was the face of his own Blanche, so dearly loved, so wildly worshipped.

Henry Mortimer clasped her to his breast, kissing her sweet lips; what cared he for the magnificence of her patrician home, the costly mirrors, superb hangings, and rare garniture of the apartment? They were as vulgar trappings in his eyes, there was but one beautiful and peerless object in the boudoir, and that was enfolded in his arms, pressed to his bosom, and panting against his heart.

"I had scarcely hoped," he exclaimed, "that there was such happiness in store for me, the dark, joyless life I have been leading was unbrightened by one passing gleam; for to me, Blanche, you seemed dead for ever, aye, worse than dead."

"Nay, Henry," she replied, "though false in outward seeming, I have been true

to you, most true in this, that my love has never swerved aside. Though the man who claims me as his wife may load me with caresses, never in my lightest mood have I returned his hated endearments."

"Oh, Blanche," he uttered, "how your words gladden my heavy heart, it *is* something to know that the peerless jewel of your love is denied to him, and that, poor and humble though I am, I hold the precious treasure in my keeping; had you been true to that love in act as well as in thought, how different would our lives have been."

"Do not reproach me," she hastily interrupted. "You know not the difficulties with which I had to contend,

I need not reiterate the old assertion, that it was impossible for me to act otherwise."

"I do not blame you, my own dearest," exclaimed Henry, "nor would I add one pang to the misery you endure, I do not even seek to intrude my own sorrows on your notice, though heaven knows they have been keen enough. I need not tell you of the fevered nights I have passed without sleep, whilst my brain nearly maddened at the thoughts of *him* lying on your soft bosom, and feasting on your charms, gloating over your loveliness, my Blanche, and such bliss denied to me."

Covering his face with his hands, she perceived that he was weeping, and half-frenzied with despair, clung to him passion-

ately, kissing him again and again. Looking into her eyes he saw the love that nestled there, the wild heaving, the frantic longing, the eager yearning of a famished heart, and in his eyes, those glorious eyes, there burned a fierce light that sparkled and gleamed with fervent warmth. Their mutual glances were understood, the famine-stricken victims must feast if but for once, the pent-up feelings must assert themselves. Oh! the delight of that moment of ecstacy, the blissful rapture of that divine embrace.

What cared they for the world's conventionalities, the rigid code of strait-laced propriety. Would those who had consigned the Lady Blanche to the prostituted marriage-bed pronounce a judgment on her

now, and dare to assert that her guilt was greater in giving herself to the man she loved, than the lewd profligate to whom her parent sold her? Verily, this world's verdict is a sorry decision.

CHAPTER XII.

MARY LENNOX RETURNS TO LONDON.

"I canna live as I hae lived,
Or be as I should be."

SIR PERCY DOUGLAS, reckoning on Mary's intense love for him, fancied it would lead her to overlook every error, and as she was utterly destitute and friendless, it seemed scarcely possible that she would relinquish a life of luxury and ease, for the miserable career from which he had rescued her. Even had she been inclined to return to her

former mode of life, it was impossible that her employer would accept her services with a blighted name and ruined reputation.

When Sir Percy questioned her regarding the future, anxiously inquiring, in case she persisted in leaving him, how she meant to maintain herself, she gave no reply; how could she, when the subject had never given her a moment's consideration. She felt that they must become as strangers, and that she was nothing to him now.

Deeply though he had sinned, Sir Percy could not regard Mary's future fate with indifference; he could not endure the thought that she would stoop to lead a life of guilt, supporting herself on the wages of infamy. Had he cared for her less, he might have induced one of his

underlings to marry her; the gamekeeper or the head gardener might have been bribed to make her his wife. But the idea was at once dismissed; he could not consign his beautiful favourite to the coarse companionship of either of these honest but illiterate worthies, nor was it in the least likely that Mary would be induced to second his wishes in this respect. The Baronet had fallen so low in her estimation, it pained her to remain, even for a brief time, a recipient of his bounty; had she followed the dictates of her feelings she would have left his home on the night he told her of his marriage, but she deemed it better to remain for a day or two that she might regain strength of mind and body, as both had been prostrated by the unexpected

shock. Meanwhile, Sir Percy was obliged to return to London, but he earnestly implored of Mary to remain at the cottage at least until he would see her again.

In this he was sincere, being anxious to endow her with a small annuity, so as to place her above penury, and to render it needless for her to return to a life of toil, or to embrace a career of guilt. His absence was a relief to Mary, for she felt how much easier would be the task she had assigned to herself; it would be a less severe trial to leave her once-loved home when no longer cheered by his presence. She was not so wanting in worldly wisdom as to be ignorant of the sacrifice she was making; no one could have rated higher the advantages gained by her connection with the Baronet,

nor prize more highly the luxuries by which she was surrounded; to forfeit them required an immense amount of moral courage. During the last few days Mary Lennox had learned a bitter lesson; she had been awakened from a dream of rapture, and must now face the cold, stern reality. As Sir Percy was only to be absent for a few days, she must leave as soon as possible in order to avoid meeting him again. The distance from London was so short, she could manage to walk, particularly as she determined to take no luggage, only a few needful articles of clothing made up in a bundle. The splendid attire and rich jewels with which she had been accustomed to adorn herself were valueless now; the humblest dress in her wardrobe would best

suit her altered state. A cold drizzling rain had fallen during the night, and the morning was raw and damp as Mary rose from her sleepless bed, and commenced preparing for her journey. She must leave the cottage unobserved, for if any of the servants divined her purpose they might seek to detain her, fearing their master's displeasure if they permitted her to leave in his absence. With a sad and weary heart Mary partook of a slight breakfast, whilst blinding tears fell from her eyes.

Her dream of joy was over, that sweet transient gleam of bliss; henceforth she must pursue her hapless course, unpitied and unloved; the path of sorrow must be trodden alone. Oh, it was hard to bear, almost beyond the limits of human endu-

rance; it was hard to leave, for ever, that home that had been a very paradise of joy to the outcast wanderer. To look for the last time on the latticed porch where they had sat so often with arms entwined.

Passing from the door, she paused to listen for a moment to the tinkling music of the mimic cascade; there was nothing very sad in the sound, and yet it called forth a fresh burst of tears—it seemed to her like the voice of a friend soon to be lost for ever.

With faltering steps she pursued her desolate journey, and not until late in the day did she reach her destination. Once more near the scene of her former trials, how trifling they appeared in comparison with her present appalling misery. Alone

in London! In the midst of overwhelming affluence, of deepest misery, where saint and sinner jostle each other in the street, where vice runs rampant and infamy reigns triumphant. Oh, the utter solitude, the maddening sense of desolation; compared with it the Great Desert is a peopled paradise. Weary and travel-stained, Mary toiled on through the crowded thoroughfares, having no fixed intention, no definite purpose. The small sum of money she had brought with her might serve to meet her wants for a few days; she could procure decent shelter and plain food, and her scanty wardrobe would be amply sufficient. Still the future lay before her, the unexplored awful future; there were days to come, there might be months and years; life

could not be laid down like a wearying load, it must be borne and sustained. Wandering on to a more aristocratic region, she found herself in the vicinity of the establishment where she had been formerly employed. It seemed to her as if she had but left it yesterday; the same superb fabrics adorned the front windows, and doubtless the same weary toilers lingered over their unwelcome tasks; still it seemed to her now like a haven of refuge, and it would have lightened her heart had she been free to re-enter the ponderous doorway, and take her place in the sickly work-room.

Night had closed in, but she had no thought of seeking a lodging, and, though suffering from inanition, had no desire for food.

As she neared the superb residence of one of England's wealthiest nobles, she perceived a number of carriages approaching in the same direction, and judging from the rich dresses and jewels of the occupants she concluded that some grand festival was about to take place. Partly from curiosity or from an undefined feeling for which she could not account, Mary followed, and taking her place in the shadow of the portico, watched the guests as they passed into the princely mansion. A dark-green chariot with a pair of magnificent black horses drew up at the entrance, and as the occupants alighted Mary retreated farther into the kindly shelter of the colonnade; the lady stood for a moment beneath the lamps, as her husband turned to give an

order to the footman, and Mary knew too well the lady who had sat in the front of the tier in the theatre. For a moment all remembrance of her own sorrow vanished; the unutterable woe, the pallid agony of that beautiful face struck her with a feeling of terror and dismay.

A coronet of diamonds blazed on the pure broad brow, but the sparkling eye flashed out with a wilder light, a despairing glare, a glance of stern defiance, a mute remonstrance against her maddening wrongs.

Mary felt that the woman before her was the more deeply wronged; she could not break the galling yoke, nor rive the hated links that bound her to her husband; she could not walk forth free and untrammelled in defiance of the world's censure! No,

she must regard appearances, respect the laws of decorum, and enact the *rôle* of a loving wife. With a bursting heart Mary saw her disappear within the brilliant mansion, and slowly turning from her hiding-place was once more alone in the streets.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WORLD'S SENTENCE ON LADY BLANCHE.

"Is there no other than condemning word
For minds untaught, and spirits sorely yoked?
Are ye quite sure no hidden leper taint
Blurs your own skin, if we look thro' the paint?"

THE whisper was very low at first. The vague suspicion merely hinted at, for no one dared to assert an opinion broadly on the subject. It was supposed that the Lady Blanche Douglas was not quite correct in her conduct, that her morals were rather questionable, and that she did

not deport herself after the recognised code of a virtuous English matron! Such was the unmeaning jargon that was bandied about from mouth to mouth. Whether she had really fallen or was merely standing on the edge of the precipice, her dear friends could not determine; they feared, pious souls! that she had already gone too far, and having once slipped there was nothing for it but to trample her down. Any attempt at reclamation would be but an encouragement to vice; though her sins were as scarlet, they should *not* be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they should *not* be as wool.

So said the world's stern censors. Oh, the cruel insinuations, the base taunts conveyed by insolent shrug, averted eye, and

stinging innuendo. An open insult might have been resented, a straightforward threat parried; but how could she meet the bitter gibe, the well-bred sneer, except by silence? to notice them would be to acknowledge the justice of her sentence.

It is not to be supposed that Lady Blanche Douglas was banished from the pale of society; within its sacred precincts her presence was still tolerated; it would have been too generous an act to have excluded her from the charmed circle, to have left her to atone in solitude for her suspected crime; better to stab her with cutting words, to torture her with cruel slanders, to goad her to madness. Wealthy dowagers shuddered with virtuous indignation as she passed them, and telegraphed

to their marketable daughters to keep clear of her company. Pious virgins arched their scraggy necks, and tossed their borrowed tresses, as they encountered her sweet appealing glance; no stain had ever rested on *their* names, no one could say that *their* reputation was tarnished! Oh, how decorously they gathered in their spreading skirts lest a passing touch of the white robe might contaminate them, whilst they mentally thanked God they were not as other women. How they plumed themselves on their immaculate purity, and indulged in the proud boast that no man had ever taken liberties with them. Heaven help them! They might have passed unscathed through a regiment of soldiers in the dog-days! It is very

easy to brag of the strength of a fortress so long as no attempt is made to storm it.

Although Lady Blanche encountered every insult in silence, every stab struck deep, the barbed arrows rankling in the wound ; the poor white lips might wreathe with mocking smiles, but the crushed heart was breaking.

She knew that the Duchess of —— would ask her dear confidential friend, the Countess of ——, had she heard this horrid report of Lady Blanche Douglas, and did she believe it ? that really for her part she feared it was too true. And then would follow a compassionate explosion of sympathy for the much-injured husband ; poor Sir Percy ! what a pity of him with such a wife ; he should apply for a divorce.

Ah, your Grace! no need for a legal separation; a higher court will ere long dissolve the accursed union. The retirement she so much dreaded, the solitary companionship of the Baronet, was almost longed for by his distracted wife; anything was better than to endure the attacks of her ambushed foes. She dared not refuse to meet them night after night, she dared not fly their presence, and yet sooner would she have encountered the contagion of a pesthouse, or joined a troop of bacchanals in a cholera hospital. Gradually the cloud extended, the well-bred hints became open insults, the cruel stabs grew deadlier, until the lacerated victim was nigh spent with anguish.

Fair delicate women joined in the rabid

cry raised by infernal malice; public opinion calling her to the bar pronounced against her. She was banned, denounced, outlawed, banished from the pale of civilised society; the world's bloodhounds were on her track, virtuous saints would drag her to the dust, and trample her underfoot. Oh, Blanche, Blanche—so basely wronged, so cruelly slandered, bear up for a while; the balance will yet be re-adjusted!

CHAPTER XIV.

LONDON BRIDGE AT MIDNIGHT.

"Oh, the pale faces
Surging and sailing!
Oh, the long garments
Lapping and trailing!"

READER! have you ever stood on London Bridge at midnight, and looking down on the dark waters thought of the ghastly contents of the putrid tide? It would seem as if the offscouring of the land had been swept into the stagnant flood, as it flows onward with its loathsome freight.

Pollution incrusts the blackened stream, and through the opaque foulness no eye can pierce. You may note the vileness that stains the surface, but what is it in comparison with the awful contents of the sealed river! Never until the sea gives up its dead will the dread repository reveal the secrets in its keeping. Oh, the young heads pillowed beneath its black waters, the bright eyes that have closed in that liquid charnelhouse, the golden hair floating amidst the drifting tangles! The poor mangled forms may rest beneath the surging tide, the hour of retribution will surely come, when the betrayer and wronger will be denounced before the judgment-seat of God.

The full moon was glancing on the river, putting to shame with its white clear

light the yellow glimmer of the flickering lamps, the foul mirror giving back a misty outline, a dull drear reflection ; still it was the same fair moon that gleamed from mountain stream and sleeping lake, the same in heaven, but wearing so different an aspect upon earth.

In quiet country places amid the green hills' solitude, the solemn light was glassed in limpid waters, the full moon shining in unbroken splendour, unlike the scattered rays reflected from the sluggish river.

The streets were still crowded by loiterers, some returning from the theatres, whilst others were hastening to scenes of revelry. Who amongst the passers-by ever thought of the fearful tragedies that had been enacted there ?

With slow and weary step a pale shadowy figure advanced towards the centre of the bridge, and leaning over the parapet looked down on the murky waters. She saw the moon's shattered reflection, the dim light of the sickly lamps, and the vague outline of her own wasted form. She had heard of broken hearts finding rest beneath the waters; but ah, what rest was promised there! Amid the turmoil of the city, amid foulness and corruption, and deadliest pollution, with the ribald laugh, the mocking jeer, and scathing curse for parting requiem, for funeral obsequies!

She thought of the distant river that had flowed beside her childhood's home, where the bright May-flowers shone, and the pale water-lilies gleamed like silver,

and the hawthorn showered down its fragile blossoms till the stream was white with snowy spray; where no discordant sounds broke the holy stillness, and the lights of heaven were reflected from the stream. How easy to find rest in such a place, to lie down beneath the glowing waters, and give the soul back to God! But oh, that awful river, that black devouring monster, with its insatiable maw, coiling like a venomous serpent through the city's crowded places, and tempting to destruction. Mary Lennox had heard that death by drowning was free from pain, that the struggle was but momentary, the conflict between soul and body soon ended. With all her assumed courage she dreaded the agonising pains produced by poison, the

slow torpor, the intolerable delay, and perhaps consequent remorse; better to end the struggle at once. And after all, what could it avail her poor wasted form to rest amongst floating lilies and golden May-flowers; what matter if instead of hawthorn blossoms, the boat-keels might be entangled in her hair?

The moon was sailing towards a strand of cloud, hitherto she had shone with undimmed brightness; and Mary resolved that before she reappeared in the sky, the deed should be done, the awful deed of self-destruction consummated. Waiting in breathless awe for the dreaded sign, the moment before she should emerge from the curtain of cloud, she saw a woman standing at a short distance gazing as she had done into

the ghastly cemetery ; gazing with stern defiant glare, and wearing on her blanched face a look of fixed anguish, of unextinguishable woe. For a moment her own resolve was shaken, so earnestly was her attention arrested by her companion. The moon had cleared the bank of cloud, and was again shining down on the dismal eerie face ; Mary Lennox knew too well what errand had brought her there, the frightful impulse that had impelled her to the contemplated act. She knew part, not all ; for she was ignorant of the vile machinations that had goaded the Earl's daughter to the verge of insanity, the malignant hate, the bitter malice that had driven her on, the vengeful fury that had hunted her down like some noxious creature.

Lady Blanche crossed the bridge in silence, unobserved except by her unseen follower. For a moment she paused as if irresolute, but the look of stern resolve returned, and a half-frantic cry broke from her lips as she plunged into the loathsome stream.

It was well that the moon sailed now through a brilliant sky, that the flickering lamps burned so brightly, bringing to light the struggling figure that battled with the waters; like a drift of sea-weed floated the golden hair, and one arm was flung wildly upwards. Another and a swifter plunge was heard, and Mary Lennox with the strength of desperation caught the drowning figure, and dragged it to the surface. Aid was soon at hand, and both intended

victims were rescued from a watery grave. Slowly Lady Blanche returned to consciousness, but the superhuman efforts that had been exerted to save her life had nearly proved fatal to her noble preserver; poor Mary had ruptured a blood-vessel, and from her lips the stream of life seemed ebbing fast.

True to her unselfish nature, she was ever ready to forget her own sorrows when the griefs of others interposed. But the end had not come yet; the high-souled woman was spared to finish her days amid happy scenes and loving friends. Thank God, on that night no drowned form was lighted by the moonbeams.

CHAPTER XV.

A DEATH-BED.

"Oh, sweet is all the land about and all the flowers that blow,
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go."

AUTUMN and winter had passed away, and awakening spring returned to cheer the dull earth. There was no gay world in London at present; the distinguished personages who had repaired to their country seats to spend Christmas in the good old

English fashion, were still rusticating amongst their ancestral acres, bored to death by that truly national malady, ennui.

How they yawned, and moped, and longed for the London season; not that they expected to enjoy it in any great degree, but the eternal round of dissipation would serve to kill time.

In a small, unpretending-looking villa near the outskirts of the city, a young woman lay dying of consumption. Though the disease is most frequently attended with suffering, yet in her case there was little pain, nor any distressing symptom, only the slow wasting away, with the unmistakeable brightening of the eye. The sick-chamber contained every comfort that

kindness could suggest, or money procure; but not all the wealth in England could avail to arrest the dread visitant. The sick girl was not alone; a lady in the dress of a widow sat by her bedside, holding one of her wasted hands, whilst she read to her of the blessed rest God has promised to the weary and broken-hearted. Mary Lennox listened with radiant eye and glowing cheek to the glorious message, and an aspiration, holier than ever ascended from beneath cathedral dome, rose from her crushed spirit.

The soft accents of Lady Blanche fell like refreshing dew on her bursting heart, and the magic influence of the blessed words imparted a healing balm to the reader's own heart; for the Baronet's widow

had passed through a fiery ordeal, the cup of sorrow had been quaffed to the very dregs. The untimely death of her husband had occasioned her but little grief; when the intelligence was brought that he had been killed by a fall from his horse in one of the parks, she only mourned that he should have been called so suddenly to the presence of his Maker, in the midst of his sins. Lady Blanche was too honest to feign distress, but she thought it better to wear the habiliments of mourning during the customary year.

With Mary Lennox the greater part of her time was passed, for to her she owed a heavy amount of gratitude, and nobly was the debt cancelled. What holy hours of sweet communion had been spent in that

still chamber, what words of heavenly import had been uttered there! and yet the worshippers were what are termed "fallen women!"

Oh, how easy it is to buffet earth's sufferers with harsh names, to brand them with senseless epithets, to dole out a stinted measure of justice in place of charity and love! It is well that the anointed priests and prelates of the land should hurl their anathemas against the stray sheep of the flock; what do they know of the trials and sufferings of the world? what can they tell of the inward conflict, the prolonged struggle, the desperate incentives to error? Let them keep to their fat benefices, and enjoy the lawful embraces of their chosen partners.

"Oh for a place in the fisherman's boat,
'Mid the billows of tossing foam,
With the men who owned neither scrip nor purse,
Nor a lordly 'palace' home."

As the weather grew warmer and milder, Mary Lennox seemed to regain strength; but the improvement proved only temporary —one of the deceitful phases of decline. She often spoke to Lady Blanche of her former life, expressing regret for the unintentional wrong she had done her. The artist was their frequent companion, and to him, also, she confided her sad story. Henry Mortimer deemed it no privation to quit his studio for hours in order to assist in ministering to the dying girl.

Another visitor often cheered the sick-room with her presence, Lady Alice De Vere. Through good and evil report she

had been true to Lady Blanche. When the outcry of scornful denunciation was at its height, this brave woman hesitated not to raise her voice in vindication of her friend; whether the accusation were true or false it mattered not, she would not join in pronouncing an evil judgment. Lady Alice was well aware what her own conduct would have been under similar circumstances; no legal tie that ever was forged would have bound her for a moment unless love sanctioned the union. True woman, true wife, her pitying heart melted with sorrow as she contemplated suffering she was powerless to remove; in defiance of the world's opinion, she openly befriended Lady Blanche, taking every opportunity of appearing in public with her.

Towards the close of spring, Mary Lennox sank rapidly, and although her benefactress would fain have tried the effects of a warmer climate, the physicians held out no hope of recovery. Slowly and gradually she faded away; surrounded by kind and untiring friends, her gentle spirit passed from a world of trial and sorrow to join her sisters who had ministered to their Saviour upon earth.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN EQUAL MARRIAGE.

"Love's banquet spread,
Now let us feast our fills."

No clanging bells with noisy clamour proclaimed the astounding tidings from tower and steeple. No musical belfry hymned the glad intelligence. The joy-bells were mute that had so often pealed forth in cruel mockery.

The superb mansion of Lord St. Clyde was not decked out in holiday attire, neither wreath nor banner embellished the

grim portico. The Earl and Countess, baffled and disappointed, like too many unprincipled schemers, mourned over the wreck of their hopes. They had sailed so long amid calm seas, they could scarcely realise the fact that adverse winds had arisen to shatter their barque; but they must school their minds to meet and endure the stubborn truth. Plot and stratagem were no longer of any avail; the high and puissant peer was powerless as a child, his boasted strength of will proving but a feeble weapon. Of course her parents would disown the Lady Blanche, whatever that sentence implies; probably it means that she was to be shut out from their august presence, and that her name was to be a forbidden utterance in their household.

Mean spite, contemptible revenge, resembling the baffled rage of a petted child. What could such narrow-minded insolence avail in comparison with the love of a brave true husband? No bevy of distinguished bridesmaids attended Lady Blanche to the altar, nor lying eloquence greeted her at the marriage feast. The solemn ceremonial that made her the wife of Henry Mortimer was a reality, not a senseless and wicked farce. She knew that the step she had taken would furnish matter for discussion in many stately homes, amongst exalted personages. How they would descant on the inequality of the match, and condemn her very improper conduct in marrying beneath her, holding her up as a warning to their daughters.

And this inequality regarding which they mouthed in such absurd style, and brandished the weapons of their scathing eloquence—in what did it consist, in what respect was the artist inferior to the Earl's daughter?

The most sapient judge in the land could scarcely have decided that question. Henry Mortimer was descended from a line of noble hardworking mechanics, lawfully begotten and honestly bred; the Lady Blanche's first titled ancestor was of the spurious progeny of the second Charles: consequently, in birth, the artist stood first. In beauty, in purity of principle, they were equal; in intellect he was the greater, and also in stability of purpose and strength of character. How then came people to talk

of the disparity existing between them when in truth there was none? Would that a few more of these equal marriages would take place, that the sordid and monopolising aristocracy of England would infuse into their worn-out stock the blood, and bone, and stalwart might of the pure yeoman race, that the Ladies Clara Vere de Vere would deem it no humiliation to mate with nature's gentlemen, instead of bedizened apes and courtly parasites.

Though Lady Blanche forfeited the good opinion of the hollow world, she retained a far loftier inheritance, her own self-respect, and the esteem of the few friends who had been ever true to her. Secure in the love of her gifted husband, she enjoys as much happiness as falls to the lot of mortals, and

the poisoned shafts of hatred and malice fall unheeded.

Reader, should you visit Rome next winter, do not fail to inquire for the studio of Henry Mortimer; he will show you paintings that can vie with the works of the most distinguished Italian masters. In particular, ask him to allow you a glance at the picture of the woodland homestead; you will acknowledge that the likeness of Lady Blanche is superb, but not more correct than that of the golden-haired child nestling on her bosom.

THE END.

BILLING AND SONS, PRINTERS, GUILDFORD, SURREY.

JULY, 1877.

SAMUEL TINSLEY'S

PUBLICATIONS.

London:
SAMUEL TINSLEY,
10, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND.

*** *Totally distinct from any other firm of Publishers.*

NOTICE.

MR. SAMUEL TINSLEY begs to intimate that he is now prepared to undertake the PRINTING and PUBLICATION of ALL CLASSES OF BOOKS, Pamphlets, &c.—Apply to MR. SAMUEL TINSLEY, *Publisher*, 10, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.*

*** ALL COMMUNICATIONS AND MANUSCRIPTS SHOULD BE DISTINCTLY ADDRESSED AS ABOVE, AND WILL RECEIVE PROMPT ATTENTION.

A SACRIFICE TO HONOUR. By Mrs. HENRY LYTTELTON ROGERS. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

AS THE FATES WOULD HAVE IT. By G. BERESFORD FITZGERALD. Crown 8vo., 10s. 6d.

A WOMAN TO BE WON. An Anglo-Indian Sketch. By ATHENE BRAMA. 2 vols., 21s.

"She is a woman, therefore may be wooed;
She is a woman, therefore may be won."
—TITUS ANDRONICUS, Act ii., Sc. 1.

"A welcome addition to the literature connected with the most picturesque of our dependencies."—*Athenæum.*

"As a tale of adventure "A Woman to be Won" is entitled to decided commendation."—*Graphic.*

"A more familiar sketch of station life in India . . . . has never been ritten. . . . ."—*Nonconformist.*

BARBARA'S WARNING. By the Author of "Recommended to Mercy." 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

BETWEEN TWO LOVES. By ROBERT J. GRIFFITHS, LL.D. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

BLUEBELL. By Mrs. G. C. HUDDLESTON. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

"Sparkling, well-written, spirited, and may be read with certainty of amusement."—*Sunday Times.*

BORN TO BE A LADY. By KATHERINE HENDERSON. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

BRANDON TOWER. A Story. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

"Familiar matter of to-day."

BREAD UPON THE WATERS: a Novel. By MARIE J. HYDE. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

BUILDING UPON SAND. By ELIZABETH J. LYSAGHT. Crown 8vo., 10s. 6d.

"We can safely recommend 'Building upon Sand.'"—*Graphic.*

CHASTE AS ICE, PURE AS SNOW. By Mrs. M. C. DESPARD. 3 vols., 31s. 6d. Second Edition.

"A novel of something more than ordinary promise."—*Graphic.*

CINDERELLA: a New Version of an Old Story. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

CLAUDE HAMBRO. By JOHN C. WESTWOOD. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

COOMB DESERT. By G. W, FITZ. Crown 8vo., 7s. 6d.

CORALIA; a Plaint of Futurity. By the Author of "Pyrna." Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

CRUEL CONSTANCY. By KATHARINE KING, Author of 'The Queen of the Regiment.' 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

DISINTERRED. From the Boke of a Monk of Carden Abbey. By T. ESMONDE. Crown 8vo., 7s. 6d.

DR. MIDDLETON'S DAUGHTER. By the Author of "A Desperate Character." 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

DULCIE. By LOIS LUDLOW. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

EMERGING FROM THE CHRYSALIS. By J. F. NICHOLLS. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

FAIR, BUT NOT FALSE. By EVELYN CAMPBELL. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

FAIR, BUT NOT WISE. By Mrs. FORREST-GRANT. 2 vols., 21s.

FAIR IN THE FEARLESS OLD FASHION. By CHARLES FARMLET. 2 vols., 21s.

FIRST AND LAST. By F. VERNON-WHITE. 2 vols., 21s.

FLORENCE; or, Loyal Quand Même. By FRANCES ARMSTRONG. Crown 8vo., 5s., cloth. Post free.

"A very charming love story, eminently pure and lady-like in tone."—*Civil Service Review.*

FOLLATON PRIORY. 2 vols., 21s.

FOR TWO YEARS. By VECTIS. Crown 8vo., 7s. 6d.

FRANK AMOR. By JAJABEE. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

FRIEDEMANN BACH; or, The Fortunes of an Idealist. Adapted from the German of A. E. BRACHVOGEL. By the Rev. J. WALKER, B.C.L. Dedicated, with permission, to H.R.H. the PRINCESS CHRISTIAN of SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN. 1 vol., crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

GAUNT ABBEY. By ELIZABETH J. LYSAGHT, Author of "Building upon Sand," "Nearer and Dearer," etc. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

GERALD BOYNE. By T. W. EAMES. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

GILMORY. By PHŒBE ALLEN. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

GOLD DUST. A Story. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

GOLDEN MEMORIES. By EFFIE LEIGH. 2 vols., 21s.

GRAYWORTH: a Story of Country Life. By CAREY HAZELWOOD. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

GRANTHAM SECRETS. By PHŒBE M. FEILDEN. 3 vols. 31s. 6d.

GREED'S LABOUR LOST. By the Author of "Recommended to Mercy," etc. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

HER GOOD NAME. By J. FORTREY BOUVERIE. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

HER IDOL. By MAXWELL HOOD. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

HILDA AND I. By MRS. WINCHCOMBE HARTLEY. 2 vols., 21s.

"An interesting, well-written, and natural story."—*Public Opinion.*

HILLESDEN ON THE MOORS. By ROSA MACKENZIE KETTLE, Author of "The Mistress of Langdale Hall." 2 vols., 21s.

HIS LITTLE COUSIN. By EMMA MARIA PEARSON, Author of "One Love in a Life." 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

IN BONDS, BUT FETTERLESS: a Tale of Old Ulster. By RICHARD CUNINGHAME. 2 vols., 21s.

IN SECRET PLACES. By ROBERT J. GRIFFITHS, LL.D. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

IN SPITE OF FORTUNE. By MAURICE GAY. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

INTRICATE PATHS. By C. L. J. S. Cr. 8vo., 7s. 6d.

IS IT FOR EVER? By KATE MAINWARING. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

JABEZ EBSLEIGH, M.P. By Mrs. EILOART, author of "The Curate's Discipline," "Meg," "Kate Randal's Bargain," etc. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

JOHN FENN'S WIFE. By MARIA LEWIS. Crown 8vo., 7s. 6d.

KATE BYRNE. By S. HOWARD TAYLOR. 2 vols. 21s.

KATE RANDAL'S BARGAIN. By Mrs. EILOART, Author of "The Curate's Discipline," "Some of Our Girls," "Meg," &c. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

KITTY'S RIVAL. By SYDNEY MOSTYN, Author of 'The Surgeon's Secret,' etc. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

LADY LOUISE. By KATHLEEN ISABELLE CLARGES. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

LALAGE. By AUGUSTA CHAMBERS. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

LASCARE: a Tale. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

LEAVES FROM AN OLD PORTFOLIO. By ELIZA MARY BARRON. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

LIFE OUT OF DEATH: a Romance. 3 vols. 31s. 6d.

LLANTHONY COCKLEWIG: an Autobiographical Sketch of His Life and Adventures. By the Rev. STEPHEN SHEPHERD MAGUTH, LL.B., Cantab. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

LORD CASTLETON'S WARD. By Mrs. B. R. GREEN. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

LOVE THE LEVELLER: a Tale. Crown 8vo., 7s. 6d.

MADAME. By FRANK LEE BENEDICT, Author of "St. Simon's Niece," etc. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

MARGARET MORTIMER'S SECOND HUSBAND. By Mrs. HILLS. 1 vol., 7s. 6d.

MARJORY'S FAITH. By FLORENCE HARDING. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

MART AND MANSION: a Tale of Struggle and Rest. By PHILIP MASSINGER. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

MARTIN LAWS: a Story. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

MARRIED FOR MONEY. 1 vol., 10s. 6d.

MARY GRAINGER: A Story. By GEORGE LEIGH. 2 vols., 21s.

MAUD LEATHWAITE: an Autobiography. By BEATRICE A. JOURDAN, Author of "The Journal of a Waiting Gentlewoman." Crown 8vo., 7s. 6d.

MR. VAUGHAN'S HEIR. By FRANK LEE BENEDICT, Author of "Miss Dorothy's Charge," etc. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

MUSICAL TALES, PHANTASMS, AND SKETCHES. From the German of ELISE POLKO. By M. PRIME MAUDSLAY. Dedicated (with permission) to Sir Julius Benedict. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

NEARER AND DEARER. By ELIZABETH J. LYSAGHT, Author of "Building upon Sand." 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

NEGLECTED; a Story of Nursery Education Forty Years Ago. By Miss JULIA LUARD. Crown 8vo., 5s. cloth.

NO FATHERLAND. By MADAME VON OPPEN. 2 vols., 21s.

NORTONDALE CASTLE. 1 vol., 7s. 6d.

NOT TO BE BROKEN. By W. A. CHANDLER. Crown 8vo., 10s. 6d.

ONE FOR ANOTHER. By EMMA C. WAIT. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

ONLY SEA AND SKY. By ELIZABETH HINDLEY. 2 vols., 21s.

OVER THE FURZE. By ROSA M. KETTLE, Author of the "Mistress of Langdale Hall," etc. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

PENELOPE'S WEB: a Story. By LOUIS WITHRED. 3 vols., 31s. d.

PERCY LOCKHART. By F. W. BAXTER. 2 vols., 21s.

PUTTYPUT'S PROTÉGÉE; or, Road, Rail, and River. A Story in Three Books. By HENRY GEORGE CHURCHILL. Crown 8vo., (uniform with "The Mistress of Langdale Hall"), with 14 illustrations by WALLIS MACKAY. Post free, 4s. Second edition.

"It is a lengthened and diversified farce, full of screaming fun and comic delineation—a reflection of Dickens, Mrs. Malaprop, and Mr. Boucicault, and dealing with various descriptions of social life. We have read and laughed, pooh-poohed, and read again, ashamed of our interest, but our interest has been too strong for our shame. Readers may do worse than surrender themselves to its melo-dramatic enjoyment. From title-page to colophon, only Dominie Sampson's epithet can describe it—it is 'prodigious.'"—*British Quarterly Review.*

RAVENSDALE. By ROBERT THYNNE, Author of "Tom Delany." 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

REAL AND UNREAL: Tales of Both Kinds. By HARRIET OLIVIA BODDINGTON. Crown 8vo., 7s. 6d.

ROSIE AND HUGH; or, Lost and Found. By HELEN C. NASH. 1 vol., crown 8vo., 6s.

RUPERT REDMOND: A Tale of England, Ireland, and America. By WALTER SIMS SOUTHWELL. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

ST. NICOLAS' EVE, and other Tales. By MARY C. ROWSELL. Crown 8vo., 7s. 6d.

SAINT SIMON'S NIECE. By FRANK LEE BENEDICT, Author of "Miss Dorothy's Charge." 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

From the **Spectator**, July 24th:—"A new and powerful novelist has arisen . . . We rejoice to recognise a new novelist of real genius, who knows and depicts powerfully some of the most striking and overmastering passions of the human heart . . . It is seldom that we rise from the perusal of a story with the sense of excitement which Mr. Benedict has produced."

SELF-UNITED. By Mrs. HICKES BRYANT. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

SHE REIGNS ALONE: a Novel. By BEATRICE YORKE. 3 vols. 31s. 6d.

SHINGLEBOROUGH SOCIETY. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

SIR MARMADUKE LORTON. By the Hon. A. S. G. CANNING. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

SKYWARD AND EARTHWARD: a Tale. By ARTHUR PENRICE. 1 vol., crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

SOME OF OUR GIRLS. By Mrs. EILOART, Author of "The Curate's Discipline," "The Love that Lived," "Meg," etc., etc. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

"A book that should be read."—*Athenæum.*

SO SINKS THE DAY STAR: The Story of Two Lovings and a Liking. By JAMES KEITH. Crown 8vo., 7s. 6d.

SONS OF DIVES. 2 vols., 21s.

SPOILT LIVES. By Mrs. RAPER. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

SQUIRE HARRINGTON'S SECRET. By GEORGE W. GARRETT. 2 vols., 21s.

STANLEY MEREDITH: a Tale. By "SABINA." Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

STILL UNSURE. By C. VANE, Author of "Sweet Bells Jangled." Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

STRANDED, BUT NOT LOST. By DOROTHY BROMYARD. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

SWEET IDOLATRY. By Miss ANSTRUTHER. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

THE ADVENTURES OF MICK CALLIGHIN, M.P. a Story of Home Rule; and THE DE BURGHOS, a Romance. By W. R. ANCKETILL. In one Volume, with Illustrations. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

THE BARONET'S CROSS. By MARY MEEKE, Author of "Marion's Path through Shadow to Sunshine." 2 vols., 21s.

THE BRITISH SUBALTERN. By an EX-SUBALTERN. 1 vol., 7s. 6d.

THE CLEWBEND. By MOY ELLA. Crown 8vo., 7s. 6d.

THE CRIMSON STAR. By J. EDWARD MUDDOCH. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

THE D'EYNCOURTS OF FAIRLEIGH. By THOMAS ROWLAND SKEMP. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

THE DAYS OF HIS VANITY. By SYDNEY GRUNDY. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

THE HEIR OF REDDESMONT. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

THE INSIDIOUS THIEF: a Tale for Humble Folks. By One of Themselves. Crown 8vo., 5s. Second Edition.

THE LOVE THAT LIVED. By Mrs. EILOART, Author of "The Curate's Discipline," "Just a Woman," "Woman's Wrong," &c. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

"Three volumes which most people will prefer not to leave till they have read the last page of the third volume."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

"One of the most thoroughly wholesome novels we have read for some time."—*Scotsman.*

THE MAGIC OF LOVE. By Mrs. FORREST-GRANT, Author of "Fair, but not Wise." 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

"A very amusing novel."—*Scotsman.*

THE MASTER OF RIVERSWOOD. By Mrs. ARTHUR LEWIS. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

THE MISTRESS OF LANGDALE HALL: a Romance of the West Riding. By ROSA MACKENZIE KETTLE. Complete in one handsome volume, with Frontispiece and Vignette by PERCIVAL SKELTON. 4s., post free.

"The story is interesting and very pleasantly written, and for the sake of both author and publisher we cordially wish it the reception it deserves."—*Saturday Review.*

THE RING OF PEARLS; or, His at Last. By JERROLD QUICK. 2 vols., 21s.

THE SECRET OF TWO HOUSES. By FANNY FISHER. 2 vols., 21s.

THE SEDGEBOROUGH WORLD. By A. FAREBROTHER. 2 vols., 21s.

THE SHADOW OF ERKSDALE. By BOURTON MARSHALL. 3 vols, 31s. 6d.

THE STAR OF HOPE, and other Tales. By VICTORIA STEWART. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

THE SURGEON'S SECRET. By SYDNEY MOSTYN, Author of "Kitty's Rival," etc. Crown 8vo., 10s. 6d.

"A most exciting novel—the best on our list. It may be fairly recommended as a very extraordinary book."—*John Bull.*

THE THORNTONS OF THORNBURY. By Mrs. HENRY LOWTHER CHERMSIDE. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

THE TRUE STORY OF HUGH NOBLE'S FLIGHT. By the Authoress of "What Her Face Said." 10s. 6d.

THE WIDOW UNMASKED; or, the Firebrand in the Family. By FLORA F. WYLDE. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

THE WOMAN THAT SHALL BE PRAISED. A Story. Crown 8vo., 7s. 6d.

THE YOUTH OF THE PERIOD. By J. F. SHAW KENNEDY, Esq., late 79th Highlanders. Cr. 8vo., 7s. 6d.

TIMOTHY CRIPPLE; or, "Life's a Feast." By THOMAS AURIOL ROBINSON. 2 vols., 21s.

TIM'S CHARGE. By AMY CAMPBELL. 1 vol., crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

TOO FAIR TO GO FREE. By HENRY KAY WILLOUGHBY. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

TOO LIGHTLY BROKEN. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

"A very pleasing story . . . . . very prettily told."—*Morning Post.*

TOM DELANY. By ROBERT THYNNE, Author of "Ravensdale." 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

"A very bright, healthy, simply-told story."—*Standard.*

"There is not a dull page in the book."—*Scotsman.*

TOWER HALLOWDEANE. 2 vols., 21s.

TOXIE: a Tale. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

'TWIXT CUP and LIP. By MARY LOVETT-CAMERON. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

'TWIXT HAMMER AND ANVIL. By FRANK LEE BENEDICT, Author of "St. Simon's Niece," "Miss Dorothy's Charge," etc. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

'TWIXT WIFE AND FATHERLAND. 2 vols., 21s.

"It is by someone who has caught her (Baroness Tautphoeus') gift of telling a charming story in the boldest manner, and of forcing us to take an interest in her characters, which writers, far better from a literary point of view, can never approach."—*Athenæum.*

TWO STRIDES OF DESTINY. By S. BROOKES BUCKLEE. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

UNDER PRESSURE. By T. E. PEMBERTON. 2 vols., 21s.

WAGES: a Story in Three Books. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

WANDERING FIRES. By Mrs. M. C. DESPARD, Author of "Chaste as Ice," &c. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

WEBS OF LOVE. (I. A Lawyer's Device. II. Sancta Simplicitas.) By G. E. H. 1 vol., Crown 8vo., 10s. 6d.

WEIMAR'S TRUST. By Mrs. EDWARD CHRISTIAN. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

WHAT OLD FATHER THAMES SAID. By COUTTS NELSON. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

WHO CAN TELL? By MERE HAZARD. Crown 8vo., 7s. 6d.

WILL SHE BEAR IT? A Tale of the Weald. 3 vols., 31s. 6d.

"This is a clever story, easily and naturally told, and the reader's interest sustained throughout. . . . A pleasant, readable book, such as we can heartily recommend."—*Spectator*.

WOMAN'S AMBITION. By M. L. LYONS. 1 vol., 7s. 6d.

YE OUTSIDE FOOLS! or, Glimpses INSIDE the Stock Exchange. By ERASMUS PINTO, Broker. A New Edition. Crown 8vo., price 5s.

Public Opinion says:—"Written in a clever, cynical, and incisive style, and thoroughly exposes the rigs and tricks of the Stock Exchange. One advantage of a perusal will be that those who allow themselves to be plundered will do so quite consciously. The volume as a whole is extremely interesting."

YE VAMPYRES! A Legend of the National Betting Ring, showing what became of it. By the SPECTRE. In striking Illustrated Cover, price 2s., post free.

ROBA D'ITALIA; or, Italian Lights and Shadows: a record of Travel. By CHARLES W. HECKETHORN. In 2 vols., 8vo, price 30s.

THE EMPEROR AND THE GALILEAN: a Drama in two parts. Translated from the Norwegian of HENRIK IBSEN, by CATHERINE RAY. In 1 vol., crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

ETYMONIA. In 1 vol., crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

HOW I SPENT MY TWO YEARS' LEAVE; or, My Impressions of the Mother Country, the Continent of Europe, the United States of America, and Canada. By an Indian Officer. In one vol., 8vo. Price 12s.

FACT AGAINST FICTION. The Habits and Treatment of Animals Practically Considered. Hydrophobia and Distemper. With some remarks on Darwin. By the HON. GRANTLEY F. BERKELEY. 2 vols., 8vo., 30s.

MALTA SIXTY YEARS AGO. With a Concise History of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, the Crusades, and Knights Templars. By Col. CLAUDIUS SHAW. Handsomely bound in cloth, 10s. 6d., gilt edges, 12s.

HARRY'S BIG BOOTS: a Fairy Tale, for "Smalle Folke." By S. E. GAY. With 8 Full-page Illustrations and a Vignette by the author, drawn on wood by PERCIVAL SKELTON. Crown 8vo., handsomely bound in cloth, price 5s.

"Some capital fun will be found in 'Harry's Big Boots.'... The illustrations are excellent, and so is the story."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

MOVING EARS. By the Ven. Archdeacon WEAKHEAD, Rector of Newtown, Kent. 1 vol., crown 8vo., 5s.

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF THE SECTS. Crown 8vo., price 5s.

ANOTHER WORLD; or, Fragments from the Star City of Montalluyah. By HERMES. Third Edition, revised, with additions. Post 8vo., price 12s.

AMONG THE CARLISTS. By JOHN FURLEY, Author of "Struggles and Experiences of a Neutral Volunteer." Crown 8vo., 7s. 6d.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE EVERLASTING TORMENT OF THE WICKED SHOWN TO BE UNSCRIPTURAL. In wrapper, Price 1s.

PUZZLES FOR LEISURE HOURS. Original and Selected. Edited by THOMAS OWEN. In ornamental wrapper. Price 1s. (post free.)

THE REGENT: a play in Five Acts and Epilogue J. M. CHANSON. Crown 8vo., 5s.

THE RITUALIST'S PROGRESS; or, A Sketch of the Reforms and Ministrations of the Rev. Septimus Alban, Member of the E.C.U., Vicar of S. Alicia, Sloperton. By A B WILDERED Parishioner. Fcp. 8vo. 2s. 6d. cloth.

EPITAPHIANA; or, the Curiosities of Churchyard Literature: being a Miscellaneous Collection of Epitaph, with an INTRODUCTION. By W. FAIRLEY. Crown 8vo., cloth. price 5s. Post free.

"Entertaining."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*
"A capital collection."—*Court Circular.*
"A very readable volume."—*Daily Review.*
"A most interesting book."—*Leeds Mercury.*
"Interesting and amusing." *Nonconformist.*
"Particularly entertaining."—*Public Opinion.*
"A curious and entertaining volume."—*Oxford Chronicle.*
"A very interesting collection."—*Civil Service Gazette.*

POEMS AND SONNETS. By H. GREENHOUGH SMITH, B.A. Fcap, 8vo, 3s. 6d.

GRANADA, AND OTHER POEMS. By M. SABISTON. Fcp. 8vo., 4s.

HELEN, and other Poems. By HUBERT CURTIS. Fcp. 8vo., 3s. 6d.

SUMMER SHADE AND WINTER SUNSHINE: Poems. By ROSA MACKENZIE KETTLE, Author of "The Mistress of Langdale Hall." New Edition. 2s. 6d., cloth.

CANTON AND THE BOGUE: the Narrative of an Eventful Six Months in China. By WALTER WILLIAM MUNDY. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

DICKENS'S LONDON: or, London in the Works of Charles Dickens. By T. EDGAR PEMBERTON, Author of "Under Pressure." Crown 8vo, 6s.

SYRIA AND EGYPT UNDER THE LAST FIVE SULTANS OF TURKEY; being the Experiences during Fifty Years of Mr. Consul-General Barker, with Explanatory Remarks to the Present Day, by his son, EDWARD B. B. BARKER, H.B.M. Consul. In 2 vols., 8vo.

A NARRATIVE OF TRAVEL AND SPORT IN BURMAH, SIAM, AND THE MALAY PENINSULA. By JOHN BRADLEY. Post 8vo., 12s.

TO THE DESERT AND BACK; or, Travels in Spain, the Barbary States, Italy, etc., in 1875-76. By ZOUCH H. TURTON. One vol., large post 8vo.

ITALY REVISITED. By A. GALLENGA (of *The Times*), Author of "Country Life in Piedmont," &c., &c. 2 vols., 8vo., price 30s. Second Edition.

The Times says—"Mr. Gallenga's new volumes on Italy will be welcome to those who care for an unprejudiced account of the prospects and present condition of the country. Most interesting volumes."

UNTRODDEN SPAIN, and her Black Country. Being Sketches of the Life and Character of the Spaniard of the Interior. By HUGH JAMES ROSE, M.A., of Oriel College, Oxford. In 2 vols., 8vo., price 30s. (*Second Edition.*)

The Times says—"These volumes form a very pleasing commentary on a land and a people to which Englishmen will always turn with sympathetic interest."

The Saturday Review says—"We can only recommend our readers to get it and search for themselves. Those who are most intimately acquainted with Spain will best appreciate its varied excellences."

OVER THE BORDERS OF CHRISTENDOM AND ESLAMIAH; or, Travels in the Summer of 1875 through Hungary, Slavonia, Bosnia, Servia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia, and Montenegro to the North of Albania. By JAMES CREAGH, Author of "A Scamper to Sebastopol." 2 vols., large post 8vo, 25s.

"May be safely recommended."—*World.*

SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE; or, Reasons and Means for the Demolition and Reconstruction of the Social Edifice. By AN EXILE FROM FRANCE. Demy 8vo., 16s.

OUR INDIAN EMPIRE: the History of the Wonderful Rise of British Supremacy in Hindustan. By the Rev. SAMUEL NORWOOD, B.A., Head Master of the Grammar School, Whalley. Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d.

10, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND.
May, 1877.

SAMUEL TINSLEY'S

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BOOKS OF THE DAY.

THE RISE AND DECAY OF THE RULE OF ISLAM.

By ARCHIBALD J. DUNN. Large post 8vo, 12*s.*

TRAVELS WEST.

By WILLIAM MINTURN. Large post 8vo, price 12*s.*

"A charming book, full of anecdotes of Western American travel, and in which the author, who travelled from New York across the whole American Western desert, gives his experience of a country almost unknown to European colonists. We wish we could transcribe some of the very clear descriptions of scenery, life, and manners in which this book abounds."—*Public Opinion.*

THERESE HENNES, AND HER MUSICAL EDUCATION: a Biographical Sketch.

By her FATHER. Translated from the German MS. by H. MANNHEIMER. Crown 8vo; 5*s.*

POPULAR NEW THREE-VOLUME NOVELS.

NOTICE.—New Story by the Popular Author of "The Curate's Discipline," "Woman's Wrong," "Just a Woman," etc.

HIS SECOND WIFE.

By Mrs. EILOART, Author of "Meg," "Just a Woman," "Woman's Wrong," etc. 3 vols. 31*s.* 6*d.*

NOTICE.—The Important Story of Russian Life by Prince Joseph Lubomirski.

TATIANA; or, The Conspiracy.

A Tale of St. Petersburg. By Prince JOSEPH LUBOMIRSKI. 3 vols. 31*s.* 6*d.*

"The story is painfully interesting."—*Standard.*

NOTICE.—The New and Popular Story by the Author of "Recommended to Mercy," "Taken upon Trust," etc.

DONE IN THE DARK.

By the Author of "Recommended to Mercy." 3 vols. 31*s.* 6*d.*

NOTICE.—The Popular New Novel by the Author of "Brown as a Berry" and "The Red House by the River."

MAR'S WHITE WITCH.

By GERTRUDE DOUGLAS, Author of "Brown as a Berry," etc. 3 vols. 31*s.* 6*d.*

"A thoroughly good novel, which we can cordially recommend to our readers. . . . We should not have grudged a little extra length to the story; . . . . for 'Mar's White Witch' is one of those rare novels in which it is a cause of regret, rather than of satisfaction, to arrive at the end of the third volume."—*John Bull.*

"The story is really extremely well told, and full of incident and interest. In short, the book is one which will repay perusal, and cannot fail to afford entertainment."—*Morning Post.*

"Its characters are excellent and life-like sketches, and the plot is sufficiently ingenious and interesting to keep our attention aroused to the end."—*Graphic.*

"The plot of 'Mar's White Witch' is effective and interesting. . . . . Denis is a charming person. There is a fine feeling of sympathy with, and comprehension of nature in the book, which will please many. . . . . 'Mar's White Witch' is a pretty book."—*Saturday Review.*

AGAINST HER WILL.

By ANNIE L. WALKER, Author of "A Canadian Heroine." 3 vols. 31s. 6d.

RIDING OUT THE GALE.

By ANNETTE LYSTER. 3 vols. 31*s.* 6*d.*

"The tale is full of stirring incident, and one or two of the character creations—notably Singleton's sister Hadee—are finely conceived and artistically developed."—*Scotsman.*

JESSIE OF BOULOGNE.

By the Rev. C. GILLMOR, M.A. 3 vols. 31*s.* 6*d.*

SHE REIGNS ALONE.

By BEATRICE YORKE. 3 vols. 31*s.* 6*d.*

"Both in the conception and treatment of her characters, and in the dramatic feeling of the more powerful scenes, Miss Yorke evinces talent of a high order."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

THE RECTORY OF OXBURY: a Novel.

3 vols. 31*s.* 6*d.* [*In the press.*

LIFE OUT OF DEATH: a Romance.

3 vols. 31*s.* 6*d.*

BITTER TO SWEET END: a Novel.

3 vols. 31*s.* 6*d.*

THE SEARCH FOR A HEART: a Novel.

By JOHN ALEXANDER. 3 vols. 31*s.* 6*d.*

TRUE WOMEN.

By KATHARINE STUART. 3 vols. 31*s.* 6*d.* [*Nearly ready.*

A VERY OLD QUESTION.

By T. EDGAR PEMBERTON, Author of "Under Pressure," "Dickens's London," etc. 3 vols. 31*s.* 6*d.* [*In the press.*

POPULAR NEW NOVELS, ETC.,

Each complete in ONE VOLUME.

THE WOMAN THAT SHALL BE PRAISED: a Novel.

By HILDA REAY. 1 vol. crown 8vo, price 7*s.* 6*d.*

"Decidedly well written, attractive, and readable . . . . . The characters stand out as if they had been pondered over and worked at; the circumstances are fresh and natural; the style is pure, and the thoughts refined."—*Athenæum.*

"Besides the heroine there is another 'woman that shall be praised,' viz., the authoress. Praised for writing in English, for some passages of poetry, for some even of slang, for her boldness and tenderness of expression, and, above all, for writing a religious novel without shocking us with pious utterances."—*Public Opinion.*

"Well written; and the household of the thriftless doctor is described with humour and a considerable insight into character."—*Daily News.*

"The story is a pleasant one to read, and the minor characters are sketched with a good deal of discrimination and humour."—*John Bull.*

"The charm of this novel lies in the character of the heroine, the young lady to whom the title refers . . . . . the good angel of the house."—*Court Circular.*

A NEW-FASHIONED TORY.

By "WEST SOMERSET." 1 vol. crown 8vo, 7*s.* 6*d.*

RENRUTH.

By HENRY TURNER. Crown 8vo, 7*s.* 6*d.*

SIBYLLE'S STORY.

By OCTAVE FEUILLET. Translated by MARGARET WATSON. Crown 8vo, 7*s.* 6*d.*

A DISCORD: a Story.

By ALETH WILLESON. 1 vol. crown 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

"The story is gracefully and thoughtfully written, and there is a distinct impress of realism about most of the personages."—*Scotsman.*

VAGABOND CHARLIE.

By "VAGABOND." 1 vol. crown 8vo, 7*s.* 6*d.*

LOVE THE LEVELLER: a Tale.

By ANGUS COMYN. 1 vol. crown 8vo, 7*s.* 6*d.*

COOMB DESERT: a Novel.

By G. W. FITZ. 1 vol. crown 8vo, 7*s.* 6*d.*

CLARA PONSONBY: a Novel.

By ROBERT BEVERIDGE. 1 vol. crown 8vo, 7*s.* 6*d.*

MUSICAL TALES, PHANTASMS, AND SKETCHES,

From the German of ELISE POLKO. Second Series. Translated by MARY P. MAUDSLAY. (Uniform with the First Series, which may also be had at the same price.) 1 vol. crown 8vo, 7*s.* 6*d.*

REAL AND UNREAL: Tales of Both Kinds.

By HARRIET OLIVIA BODDINGTON. Crown 8vo, 7*s.* 6*d.*

ADAM AND EVE'S COURTSHIP; or, How to Write a Novel.

By JAY WYE. Crown 8vo, price 7*s.* 6*d.*

THE BRIDE OF ROERVIG.

By W. BERGSOE. Translated from the Danish by NINA FRANCIS. Crown 8vo, 7*s.* 6*d.*

TOUCH NOT THE NETTLE: a Story.
By ALEC FEARON. Crown 8vo, 7*s.* 6*d.*

THROUGH HARDSHIPS TO LORDSHIP.
By FLORA EATON. Crown 8vo, 7*s.* 6*d.*

DAISY AND THE EARL.
By CONSTANCE HOWELL. Crown 8vo, 7*s.* 6*d.*

THE VANDELEURS OF RED TOR.
By THEODORE RUSSELL MONRO. Crown 8vo, 7*s.* 6*d.*
[*Nearly ready.*

THE LADY BLANCHE.
By HAROLD ST. CLAIR. Crown 8vo, 7*s.* 6*d.* [*In the Press.*

EXCELLENT BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG.

Now ready, in one very handsome volume, with a number of graphic Coloured Illustrations, price 5*s.* post free, and of all Booksellers.

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM HANSON;
Or, Brave Endeavours Achieve Success; a Story for Boys. By FIRTH GARSIDE, M.A.

ROSIE AND HUGH; a Tale for Boys and Girls.
By HELEN C. NASH. 1 vol. crown 8vo, 6*s.*
"In 'Rosie and Hugh' we have all the elements of fiction presented in the best possible form to attract boys and girls. Wholesome, pure, lively, with here and there a dash of humour, the book is certain to be a favourite with both parents and children . . . A cheerful, clever work."—*Morning Post.*

SEED-TIME AND REAPING.
By HELEN PATERSON. Crown 8vo, 5*s.*

RECENT PAMPHLETS.

THE OLD TABLE: a Story for the Young.
In Wrapper, 1*s.* post free.

"ANY WOMAN WILL DO FOR A MAN:"
A Warning to those about to Marry. In Wrapper, 6*d.* post free. (Now ready. New Edition, price 3*d.*)

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.
The Doctrine of the Everlasting Torment of the Wicked shown to be Unscriptural. In Wrapper, 1*s.* post free.

THE IRISH COLLAPSE;
or, Three Months of Home Rule: Vision of Confusion. Dedicated to the Right Hon. the Earl of Beaconsfield. By the MEMBER FOR DONNYBROOK. In Wrapper, 1*s.* post free.

LONDON:
SAMUEL TINSLEY, 10, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND.